LAND-BASED AIR POWER IN THIRD WORLD CRISES

CENTER for AEROSPACE DOCTRINE RESEARCH and EDUCATION

LAND-BASED AIR POWER IN THIRD WORLD CRISES

by

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In Memory of
Captain Norman Leo Martel, USAF
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FOREWORD

The third world continues to grow in its importance to the United States. Often possessing a wealth of vital natural resources or a geographic position astride crucial lines of communications, third world nations have, in many cases, become the focal point of East-West confrontations. Additionally, the frequent political turmoil and economic crises that plague some of these third world nations often threaten the vital interests of the West.

For all of these reasons, it is imperative that we understand the utility and limitations of military power applied to crisis situations in the third world. Land-based air power is of particular importance in rapidly developing crises because of its range of action and speed of response. Dr Mets' study focuses on land-based air power in a variety of these situations over the past three decades.

Clearly, the subject is important to our understanding of the most effective use of air power. It is also clear that Dr Mets has made a significant contribution to the literature of air power and provides a message that we all should heed.

Donald D. Stevens

DONALD D. STEVENS
Colonel, USAF
Commander
Center for Aerospace Doctrine,
Research, and Education

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr David R. Mets earned his BS from the US Naval Academy, his MA from Columbia University, and his PhD from the University of Denver. He completed a 30-year career in the US Navy and Air Force in 1979. During his career, he taught diplomatic and military history at both the Air Force Academy and West Point and served as the editor of the *Air University Review*, the professional journal of the Air Force. He holds both navigator and pilot ratings and his service also included two flying tours in Southeast Asia. The first (1968-70) was as an aircraft commander of C-130s and the latter was in AC-130s. During the *Mayaguez* Crisis he was operations officer of the 16th Special Operations Squadron supplying night fire support for the US forces in the Crisis. Later he took command of the squadron. As a MATS navigator, Mets has flown many of the routes and visited many of the places in Europe, Africa, and Asia that figure in this work. He is now working as a Historian at Air Force Systems Command's Armament Division located at Eglin AFB. His first book, *NATO: An Alliance for Peace* was published in 1981 by Julian Messner in New York.

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PREFACE

The basic thrust of this study is to demonstrate the utility and limitations of land-based aircraft when used to attain political objectives in crises occurring in the third world. Crises, when used in the context of this study, are viewed primarily as a series of interactions between or within states for which there exists the perception of a high probability of war. Admittedly, determination of perception is a subjective process, one that does not lend itself to qualification; but when fear, apprehension, and tension reach a level that prompts some form of conflict behavior, then a perception of a high probability of war can be said to exist.

Beyond any doubt, our case study of the 1973 Yom Kippur War will clearly indicate the existence of a major crisis and one that escalated to dangerous levels. By contrast, our case studies of the *Mayaguez* in 1975, the Congo and the Bay of Pigs in the early sixties, and Zaire in the mid-seventies, indicate a lower level of intensity. Consequently, we examine these conflicts on a typological basis ranging from a simple to a complex crisis; and, since the essence of a crisis is its uncertainty and unpredictability, these latter case studies remain suitable for our analysis.

Collectively, these interactions appear to provide ample evidence of the utility of land-based aircraft to signal intentions, demonstrate support, modify behavior, and terminate conflict. By the same token, however, these interactions suggest some limitations of land-based aircraft when employed in remote areas distant from main operating bases. Our case studies span the globe to examine third world crises occurring as far away as Southeast Asia and as close to home as the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. Thus, this discussion presents a geographical sample as well as a typological study of third world crises.

David R. Mets

DAVID R. METS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Airpower Research Institute was founded as a part of the Air University in 1980 to further investigation of topics on the application of air power to the problems of achieving national political objectives. The current work is one of the first two studies initiated by the institute. It was inspired in part by two seminal books which looked to the achievement of political goals using the military instrument of policy without war. The first of these was *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, by Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William R. Simons. It might well be deemed one of the classic works on the subject, and the lattermost author had an important role in the genesis of this study. The second, *Force Without War*, by Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, is also at the head of its field and sets a standard toward which this study can only reach. These two classics, then, approached the subject with a view toward investigating the utility and limitations of military instruments, in general, in the achievement of political goals without war. The aim here was to continue that investigation with a more specialized study that would take a closer look at the ways the air-power element of the military instrument could and could not be used for such purposes.

More than any other individual, the first director of the Airpower Research Institute, Col Thomas Fabyanic, USAF, gave purpose and form to this book. He was at the heart of the initial conceptualization, gave the project direction as it was developing, and had a major hand in the editing that brought it down from a mass of papers to what we hope is a more coherent and usable form. The depth and scope of his imagination and knowledge were especially central to the first and last chapters.

The achievement of Ms Mary Schenk, Ms Edna Davis, and Ms Jo Ann Perdue in supporting the work during the initial writing deserves special recognition, for their competence could not be repressed by the confusion attendant the initial organization of a new institution, the Airpower Research Institute. Important to the preparation of the manuscript was the editing of Ms Bessie Varner, whose work went beyond the mere call of duty. The final preparation of the manuscript was done by Ms Dorothy McCluskie and her staff and their obvious expertise and unfailing good humor made it a pleasure to participate in that part of this work.

There is much truth in the axiom that a tree is known by its fruit. Most of the research for this book was done in the Air University Library, the director of which is Mr Robert Lane. The results of his work are clear. His expertise and cooperative spirit are reflected throughout his staff, without exception. His library is one of the best in the southeast United States and doubtless the leading air power library in the world. For the researcher, there can be no more pleasant working environment, and I am especially grateful to Mr Lane and his staff for making it so.

Finally, this book is dedicated to Captain Norman Leo Martel, USAF, who died in the line of duty even as it was being written. When he left us he was at the controls of his Air Force MC-130 when it crashed into Subic Bay. I knew him well, though not long enough. He was a Christian soldier of the first rank, and with him the US Air Force and America lost one of our finest sons.

CHAPTER 1

POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND MILITARY POWER: SOME RELATIONSHIPS

The existence of a relationship between the use of military force and the attainment of political objectives is a generally accepted premise. Less obvious is the nature of that relationship. This uncertainty results in part because of the enormous potential of military force that permits its use across a spectrum of options to achieve a variety of political objectives. At one extreme, for example, there exists the possibility of gaining influence in domestic and international politics merely by allocating limited resources to the development, production, and deployment of weapon systems. More directly, a government can attempt to signal concern, commitment, or intentions by incremental increases in the readiness condition of forces and by altering their deployment status. Yet another example would be to establish a political objective that calls for the destruction of an existing political entity, in which case maximum military force might be required for an extended time.

When the objective is to destroy a political entity, the cause-and-effect relationship between the use of military force and attainment of the political objective is clear enough. But when the political objective is to influence rather than destroy, proving cause and effect becomes a most difficult task. Even in situations where discrete political objectives are sought by applying a measured degree of military force, it is virtually impossible, for numerous reasons, to determine casuality in exact terms. Nevertheless, analysis of the use of force to modify behavior in the post-World War II experience suggests that the use of force often achieves desired political objectives, at least in the near term.[1] Given that implied relationship, it is, perhaps, worthwhile to examine how specific elements of military power have been used, short of waging war, to influence the behavior of an actor in the international arena. More specifically, the purpose here is to explore the utility and limitations of US land-based air power in achieving political objectives in an environment described as a crisis situation.

CRISIS DEFINED

Since the term crisis, as used in international politics, is defined in many ways, it is necessary to provide at least a working definition that can be used for further analysis. Fortunately, a suitable one has been developed by Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, who define international crises as

> *a sequence of interactions between the governments of two or more sovereign states in severe conflict, short of actual war, but involving the perception of a dangerously high probability or war* [emphasis in the original].[2]

The definition specifically identifies a number of concepts for further analysis, but perhaps its greatest value is the implied emphasis it places on unpredictability. Given its central role in a crisis, unpredictability argues that decision makers, as much as they would like it to be otherwise, simply cannot fully control events.[3] They are forced, instead, to cope with the phenomena of risk and uncertainty as they affect both the political and military aspects of a crisis. In broad terms, risk is defined as the degree of probability that a desired political or military outcome will not occur within identified parameters or assumptions. Uncertainty, by contrast, represents the state of incomplete knowledge that exists about the political aspects of a crisis and the application of force to resolve it.[4] Both risk and uncertainty are inherent in crisis, and they can be measured or estimated through the use of various analytical processes. The confidence levels one assigns to the outcomes, however, quite often are open to challenge.

Less debatable are the arguments that crises will occur with a degree of regularity and that the United States (and the USSR as well) will use military force in an attempt to "resolve" the crises on favorable terms. The use of military power short of war has been a frequent occurrence in the post-World War II period for both the United States and the USSR; this fact is well documented and offers much evidence for the utility of military force as a means of achieving political objectives.[5] Less clear, however, is the utility of specific elements of military power and how the changing international environment may alter their effectiveness.

CATEGORIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY FORCE

In a classical sense, military forces are divided into the three separate categories of ground combat, naval, and air forces. These formal distinctions, however, are clouded by the comprehensive capability and flexibility of US military organizations. As examples, both the United States Army and Navy possess substantial combat air power potential, and the United States Marine Corps includes organic ground and air combat forces. Other limited redundancies exist, but in the main, US combat forces tend to function in a primary medium. The Army and the Marine Corps basically are ground forces, the Navy primarily functions at sea, and the Air Force operates in the aerospace medium. Obviously, the basic characteristics of these forces differ, and as a consequence, specific elements tend to be more appropriate than others for use in certain crisis interactions. Each force offers a different type of combat capability and its use conveys a discernible diplomatic and political message.

Perhaps the highest level of commitment in a crisis is made by the deployment of ground combat forces. In contrast to other types of force, considerably more effort is required to deploy and withdraw ground combat forces; while deployed they are highly visible because of one of their major functions of seizing and holding territory. Much less of a commitment, however, is suggested by the use of naval power. Naval battle groups can be deployed to a crisis area with relative ease and low cost, primarily because some are normally at sea anyhow, and their responsiveness to a crisis mainly is a function of proximity to the crisis location. Moreover, and in contrast to ground combat forces, ships at sea offer the potential of limited visibility in the crisis area, should that be desired; however, if more visibility is required, the use of naval air power can extend it by conducting appropriate air operations. But perhaps of greatest importance is the ability of naval forces to depart an area as quickly as they arrive. This flexibility can be a major advantage, particularly given the political and operational risk and uncertainty inherent in crisis.[6]

LAND-BASED AIR POWER CAPABILITIES

Between these relatively high and low levels of commitment and visibility offered by ground and naval forces, respectively, there exists an intermediate point in the crisis response spectrum. Specifically, the unique characteristics and capabilities of land-based air power are the factors that make available a wider range of options for use in the interactions that typify a crisis. In general, land-based air power signals a level of commitment greater than naval power but less than ground forces, and a visibility factor less than ground forces but greater than naval forces.

Without doubt, the most significant unique characteristic of land-based air power is its range, the ability to travel vast distances unimpeded by terrain. Land-based air power is global in nature, and in this respect its performance is unmatched by other types of air power. When the range factor is combined with the payload characteristic of land-based cargo aircraft, for example, an enormous potential becomes available for immediate use during crises. Relatively large volumes of material and personnel, military and nonmilitary, can be transported to and from a distant crisis area faster by land-based aircraft than by any other means.

A third unique aspect of land-based air power arises from combining the range characteristics with an ability to deliver vast amounts of conventional ordnance. The mere existence of this conventional strategic bombing potential, the ability to place the force at a high level of alert status for immediate use, and the actual deployment of it to more threatening forward bases clearly offer the United States a flexible military option for crisis response. Likewise, tactical land-based aircraft, despite relatively limited range, provide yet another alternative during crisis interactions. Their forward deployment to distant areas in a responsive manner is possible because of an extensive aerial refueling force. In almost routine fashion, entire squadrons of tactical land-based aircraft of various types are regularly deployed from the United States to numerous overseas locations, and they can arrive prepared to perform in their assigned roles.

Yet another unique function of land-based aircraft is its ability to perform strategic surveillance and reconnaissance. Particularly during crises, the nature of the data and information collected and their immediate availability to decision makers make more reliable choices likely. A final unique capability of land-based aircraft is its responsiveness. It can position itself and establish a presence in distant areas more rapidly than any other type of military force; it provides enormous flexibility by permitting deployment of various types of power instantly, either en masse or incrementally; it can redeploy from a location almost as quickly as it deployed; and, unlike other forms of air power, land-based aircraft has the capability to be placed over virtually any geographical location in the world within hours of decision.[7]

In addition to those unique characteristics of land-based air power, it is noteworthy that the ability of the United States to employ it is virtually unsurpassed in the international arena. Our most formidable competitor, the USSR, cannot match the demonstrated ability and proficiency of American strategic airlift, bombardment, and reconnaissance forces. The frequency of US land-based air power deployments and the relative ease with which they are conducted permit one to characterize them as near routine in nature. As such, they continuously inform allies, friends, neutrals, and potential adversaries alike of the potency of US air power projection forces. In short, US land-based air power deployment sends a steady and reasonably clear signal to the international community, while at the same time the size, flexibility, and proficiency of deployments tend to reduce the levels of risk and uncertainty that accompany crisis responses.

Like any other arm, however, land-based air power possesses some clear operational limitations, particularly for crises which occur in certain areas in which combat is to be avoided. At times, the combined political and operational challenges associated with crises are sufficiently severe to make some deployments difficult or even impractical. Specifically, overflight of another's sovereign territory or the use of en route bases for aircraft maintenance, crew rest, or refueling cannot always be assured. This is especially true if the crisis involves vital international or regional concerns of a political, economic, or ideological nature. Indeed, the crisscrossing or overlapping nature of these currents, especially in the third world, adds to the operational risk and uncertainty inherent in the deployment of military power. Aside from en route basing and overflight constraints, the most serious question concerning the use of land-based aircraft, at times, is the availability of a suitable airfield in or sufficiently near the crisis area. A decision to use force to secure an airfield may be unacceptable if combat is not desired; but if such a decision is made, it is probable that some type of ground force would be required for this purpose. The net effects, of course, are an escalation of the crisis, a demonstration of higher commitment, an increase in operational risk and uncertainty, and a greater demand on those land-based air power systems necessary to support ground forces.

Another relative shortcoming of land-based air power is the restricted weight and volume of deployable cargo when compared to surface transportation. Certainly the former could not match the gross lift potential of the latter, yet the ability of land-based aircraft to transport a limited amount of cargo for the crisis at hand, and to do so with unmatched speed, may be the most important consideration.

OPTIONS IN SELECTING LAND-BASED AIR POWER

Given the enormous potential and recognized limitations of land-based air power, it clearly offers a number of options suitable for achieving a range of policy objectives. At one end of the spectrum there should be available to the decision maker a low-level or limited military response mechanism that tends to convey both seriousness of purpose and controlled restraint. A usual procedure is to place one's military force or part of it in a higher state of readiness by increasing its alert status. Such a move is not taken lightly, however, for two distinct reasons. First, forces cannot be maintained at other than normal posture for extended periods. Increased alert status extracts a high cost from personnel and equipment—personnel, because they no longer can perform necessary routine functions, and equipment because it usually is immobilized for possible deployment. Indeed, shortly after achieving a higher-than-normal alert status, the actual readiness of a force tends to decline unless fresh personnel and equipment are assigned to it. But a more important aspect of increased alert is the perception of the diplomatic signal it sends as seen by the intended recipients. A changed alert status tends to transmit a message of concern, seriousness of purpose, or intended involvement. But the message can be ambiguous in that the recipient may not understand whether the alert is the "last step in an effort to bring about a peaceful settlement or a first step toward war."[8]

The implication here, of course, is that decision makers should select forces for increased alert with great care in those situations where a choice of forces is available. For example, if tactical air combat capability is required, one could choose land-based air power, increase its alert status, and allow it to remain at its normal operation location. By contrast, one could select naval aviation for the increased alert status; but unless the selected air wing is in the proximity of the crisis area, it is likely that operational considerations would suggest deployment of the air wing, along with the remainder of its battle group, to the objective area. Such a move may well convey the wrong message in a crisis, not only because carrier aviation involves a deployment move, but because the total combat capability of the battle group may exceed the intended level of combat power. On the other hand, land-based air power capability can be tailored more easily for a crisis, and its flexibility and responsiveness may permit more precise command and control. As a consequence, the probability of delivering the intended signal is increased while the likelihood of conveying an imprecise one is reduced.

Another political objective that might be established during crisis interactions is to support or reinforce the current behavior of allies, friends, neutrals, or adversaries. The behavior to be sustained could be some decision on the use of their respective military forces, activity relating to existing governmental stability, or other types of political, economic, or military operations. In such circumstances, any number of different military force structures might be employed to demonstrate support, primarily because it appears that behavior reinforcement is easier to accomplish than behavior modification. Ongoing activity tends to develop a momentum of its own, and thus only a limited amount of reinforcing action might be required to sustain such momentum. That being the case, perhaps the operational risk and uncertainty associated with an objective that seeks to support or reinforce might be small, the net result being that fewer forces can be used. Indeed, the findings in a comprehensive analysis of force employment short of war suggest that the highest rate of success for the United States both in the short and long term (after six months and after three years respectively), occurred when its objective was to reinforce behavior and when it used minimum levels of force.[9] This latter finding in particular and the relative ease with which one can reduce the size of land-based aircraft units make them the preferred instruments for a supportive or reinforcing operational objective.

Unlike the supportive or reinforcing objectives, however, a crisis that requires one to deter another international actor from some action is far more difficult to achieve. Additionally, the measurement of success is not easy, particularly in the case of adversaries or neutrals, primarily because reliable information concerning their intentions may be unavailable. Moreover, deterrence tends to be a dynamic process, and what deters in a given circumstance may not deter in others. The nature of deterrence, especially in a crisis, clearly suggests that military forces used for this objective should be chosen and employed with care. Perhaps the most important features of forces used in this manner are flexibility and responsiveness, since success may depend primarily on the precise nature of the military instruments, the capacity of those forces to react quickly, and the ability of those forces to be changed during the employment phase. Land-based air power appears to possess these features to a greater extent than other forms of air power. At the outset, its strategic reconnaissance can provide the type of timely information required by decision makers and tactical commanders. More accurate force tailoring then becomes possible for alerting, deploying, or employing forces. Moreover, throughout the execution of the selected course of action, the strategic reconnaissance forces can attempt to identify responses from the target actor, thus providing feedback for possible new decisions. Other land-based aircraft with comparable strategic reach, such as command and control assets, airlift, and combat forces, then can be employed selectively in response to changed circumstances. This potential notwithstanding, a cause-and-effect relationship between applying force and deterring a target actor may not become obvious. Indeed, in many instances, where the objective is to deter, crises may be resolved without any clear evidence of successful deterrence. Nevertheless, the probability of a positive outcome in such attempts clearly is enhanced when maximum flexibility and responsiveness exist in the military force structure.

A more difficult objective during crises is to force a change in ongoing events—that is, to compel a target state to modify its actions. Particularly when a target state has embarked on a course of action indicated by careful analysis, it is unlikely that forced behavior modification by military means could be accomplished without considerable effort. By contrast, however, target state actions taken more capriciously are more susceptible to modification, although at times twisted logic or the sheer momentum of an action could lead to an unwarranted level of steadfastness—particularly if national emotions are involved.

The level of commitment by a target state to a course of action aside, the military forces used to compel or modify that behavior must not convey an ambiguous intent or capability. If the force chosen appears too robust in the eyes of the target state, it might stiffen its resolve. By contrast, if a lack of force credibility is perceived, behavior modification is less unlikely. The distinct advantages possessed by land-based aircraft in such interactions are the balanced message it emits and its ability to change its composition in a responsive manner. With regard to the former, land-based aircraft probably signals a level of determination that exceeds naval power but that is less than that of ground combat power. This signal tends to strike a balance between what might be considered as overly direct on the one hand and too latent on the other. The capability of land-based air power to modify its composition is perhaps of greater importance because of the interactive nature of a crisis. That is, one can expect a degree of action and reaction in a crisis; thus, the ability of forces to cope with escalatory or de-escalatory situations is highly desirable.

The objectives of signaling, supporting, deterring, and compelling describe the range of options that might be required for behavior modification during crises. Under certain conditions it might be possible for one to choose an objective, employ forces appropriately, and bring about an acceptable solution. However, it is conceivable that it might be necessary in a crisis to select each of the objectives sequentially and modify the force structure accordingly. Moreover, if more than a primary target state is involved, one might need to pursue several different objectives simultaneously. Under such circumstances, force structure flexibility and effective command and control are vital.

Nevertheless, aside from its use as a means to signal, support, deter, and compel, the unique characteristics and capabilities of land-based air power also permit its use in efforts to stabilize and terminate crises. As argued earlier, the essence of a crisis is its unpredictability. One of the greatest dangers, therefore, is that a crisis will get out of control and develop a momentum of its own. But a crisis that cannot be controlled obviously possesses increased levels of risk and uncertainty, and thereby leads to a dangerously high probability of actual war rather than the mere perception of the risk of war, as described in our definition of a crisis. The ability to stabilize a crisis would seem a most valuable asset, exceeded only by the ability to terminate a crisis on acceptable terms.

The use of military force to stabilize or terminate a crisis on acceptable terms presents a formidable challenge, but the very nature of a crisis offers opportunities for its resolution. As implied by our definition of a crisis, it is a sequence of interactions that continues only so long as uncertainty exists. "If each party knew what the other intended to do—in simple terms, yield, stand firm, or fight—and also knew its own intentions in the light of that knowledge, there could be no crisis.''[10] Military force, of course, cannot be used to determine the intentions of others, but certain elements of the military instrument can obtain some of the data and information upon which judgments are made concerning the intentions of another actor.

The interactive nature of a crisis suggests, moreover, that discrete events between or among actors occur over time and that each event tends to elicit a response. Thus, action, reaction, posturing, and bargaining become part of the crisis interaction process, although at the outset the main efforts may consist of attempts to reduce the level of uncertainty by gathering information. Should the resulting data suggest the imbalance of military force, then the most likely step for the weaker actor would be to reestablish a balance, thus creating better conditions for crisis stability.

Among the choices, land-based air power appears particularly well suited to contribute to crisis stability. First, the range, responsiveness, and capability of its reconnaissance systems are unmatched and thus are able to provide the prompt and accurate information necessary to make initial crisis judgments. Should the data indicate the need for the United States or its client(s) to bolster their force structures, then land-based air power's global range and capacity for firepower and cargo delivery become responsive tools for establishing force symmetry as an essential and immediate step toward stability.

Crisis termination, obviously, is much more difficult to achieve. Yet, like crisis stability, its attainment is inversely related to the level of uncertainty. In this respect, the use of land-based air power may lower the levels of uncertainty because of its response credibility and known limitations. Its inherent characteristics enable the decision maker to direct incremental force modifications during crises in order to reduce uncertainty by making US intentions reasonably clear. Decreasing the level of uncertainty by making intentions more obvious contributes not only to the enhancement of the bargaining atmosphere inherent in a crisis but to its termination as well.

But using land-based air power to achieve crisis termination clearly requires an ample measure of mental dexterity by those who conceive options for its use. Therefore, the first task for military professionals is to conceive force structure employment options for crises by thinking beyond classical modes of force use. The likelihood of a crisis, its inherent unpredictability, and its relationship to the outbreak of war, clearly make the task an urgent one.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978), 67–71 and 515–19.

2. Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining and Decision Making in International Crisis* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 6–9.

3. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 92–99.

4. Thomas A. Fabyanic, "Conceptual Planning and the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force," *Armed Forces and Society* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1981): 355.

5. For a fuller discussion, see Blechman and Kaplan, *Force Without War;* and Stephen S. Kaplan et al., *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981).

6. For a fuller description of relative force capability in crisis interactions, see Blechman and Kaplan, *Force Without War*, 38–49.

7. For a fuller discussion of characteristics and capabilities of land-based aircraft, see AFM 1-1, *Functions and Basic Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, 14 February 1979, 2–6 to 2–30 and 3–1 to 3–4.

8. Joseph T. Kruzel, "Military Alerts and Diplomatic Signals," in *The Limits of Military Intervention*, ed. Ellen P. Stern (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977), 84.

9. Blechman and Kaplan, *Force Without War*, 86–108.

10. Snyder and Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations*, 8.

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CHAPTER 2

THE THIRD WORLD AND THE UNITED STATES: PROBLEMS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND OUTLOOKS

The United States has recently been building her foreign policy on a world view that describes an environment that never existed. American foreign policy discounts the importance of power, escalates the significance of economic factors, and emphasizes North-South relations over the East-West balance. Further, US foreign policy has of late been too timid to try to accommodate the interests of America to change the less-developed countries (LDCs)—whether or not that change were good. It is not that the perceived problems are not real and that crises will not occur in great numbers; the error is in the notions that the United States cannot use her power to shape events and that military power has lost its utility.[1]

Futurists are saying that population growth in LDCs is likely to vastly exceed the third world's capacity to take care of its people, and that is going to mean big trouble for the United States. The economic and social problems, many say, cannot be overcome by political means, for the League of Nations and the United Nations have shown that a vigorous world government is just not in the cards. If there is little hope that strong world government will evolve to force solutions to these problems, there is even less prospect that cultural divisions will permit sufficient cooperation to permit escape from the dilemma. It does not seem probable that another Alexander or Napoleon will come along to try to impose unity on the world. Even if one did, power is too diffused to permit development in the areas that need it the most. Thus, even skeptics would agree with the modern-day Cassandras' assumption that international crises will recur with increasing frequency and violence. Further, though the United States hoped to lessen her involvement with the third world in the aftermath of Vietnam with the Nixon Doctrine, it seems that she cannot so dissociate herself. Her interests in some parts of the world are too vital and (as Iran showed) surrogates are too unreliable for her to trust her fate to them. Evidently, US interdependence with the third world is bound to continue, though perhaps not as much as we may fear. If the violence and crises are to continue and if the United States cannot avoid involvement, then how is she to maintain her interests?

Of course, any viable foreign policy for the third world must be a balanced one depending on all the instruments of foreign policy: political, economic, psychological, and military. But our principal focus here is on the utility and limitations of the military instrument, and land-based air power in particular, as contributing factors in crisis resolution. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine in some detail the specific problems and assumptions on which we base our relations with the third world.

PROBLEMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

According to *The Global 2000 Report to the President*, "Barring revolutionary advances in technology, life for most people on earth will be more precarious in 2000 . . . than it is now—unless the nations of the world act decisively to alter current trends."[2] The same study goes on to say that the population will have increased by more than 50 percent in the last quarter of the twentieth century and that most of the growth will come in those parts of the world least able to handle it. The earth, the report says, will become more productive but the greater part of the growth in per capita income will come in the developed part of the world. Some economic growth will come in Latin America, but the per capita income in Africa and Asia will actually decline. Food production should go up considerably, but again the increase will be in those places where the diet is already ample. In the LDCs, the poverty of the places will prevent the use of soil enrichment to increase yield—this is something that will become ever worse because of the rising price of the energy that is required to manufacture fertilizer. As if that were not enough, in some parts of the underdeveloped world, the rising price of oil will cause a reversion to the use of wood for cooking and heating. The use of wood, in turn, will cause a rapid deforestation, which will lead to soil salinization, water shortages, even less food, and the creation of deserts on once-fertile land.[3] *The Global 2000 Report* is not even the most pessimistic of its type. For example, a study done by Guy J. Pauker predicts that we are headed for population disaster and that there will be third world food riots as early as the 1980s.[4]

One of the most serious obstacles to a solution to food problems is in the very nature of things. Most of the LDCs have gained their independence from colonial status in the past few years. A part of the anticolonial rhetoric that led to their independence was that these countries could do better in an economic sense under native leadership than was possible in a colonial status. Many of them have now found that the problems are more intractable than they thought, and they have had to develop new theories to justify themselves in light of the continuing poverty. The leaders cannot admit that a part of the problem arises from domestic sources, so they have to sell their people on the notion of neocolonialism, or dependency theory. It is really a more sophisticated way of inventing a "foreign bogey" than was used by the politicians of the early days of the American Republic when they "twisted the lion's tail" and blamed the British for all sorts of ills. In fact, the tendency is to be found in almost all newly independent societies. In the third world today, though the foreign legions are gone, the leaders say the West is maintaining its hegemony through means of unfair pricing of commodities and manufactured goods in world trade.[5] All of this serves them as justification for the creation of cartels, the return to protectionism, and the demands for massive transfer of wealth from the first world to the third world. When the effects of nationalism, or even xenophobia, are added to the equation, the obstacles seem formidable indeed.

BLIND ALLEYS

Some experts hope for peaceful solutions to the problems of the LDCs through the building of international institutions if a stronger United Nations cannot be built.[6] However, the majority seem to feel that the "one world" that was such a bright dream for many optimists at the end of World War II has become ever more improbable. Of course, the United Nations has achieved some worthwhile things in the technical and social realms and even has performed some useful security functions. Still, whenever the superpowers have had a vested interest in a dispute, or even when they were totally disinterested, the United Nations has been unable to maintain the peace.[7] Thus, one must assume that the United Nations and all other international organizations will remain impotent to intervene in third world disputes.

If collectivist political solutions do not offer much hope, what of economic measures? America came out of World War II convinced that poverty is the root of all evil, especially Communist evil, and her first approach to the growing Soviet threat in the late forties was an economic one: the Marshall Plan. At the outset, even the military alliance, NATO, was meant to be a complement to the main economic instrument. The Marshall Plan was to have been the shield behind which the economic miracle could be worked. Some, like Dean Acheson, felt the alliance was more important because it gave the Europeans the confidence they needed to bring their capital back home than because of its military potential.[8] Thus, even the military alliance was, in a way, an economic measure.

The Marshall Plan worked like a charm in Europe, and similar measures applied in Japan worked equally well—too well, perhaps, for some American businesses that now have to compete. For a long time, Americans have assumed that similar economic aid would help pull the third world out of its travail, but the situation there is not the same. Though both Germany and Japan had economies that were in ruins in 1945, the basic human and material capital was there and could serve as foundations for an economic rebirth. Those foundations are not present in most areas of the third world.

The hope of closing the economic gap between the first and third worlds is now a fading one for many Americans. A good bit of foreign aid has been sent to the LDCs and the results have been disappointing. Lately, foreign aid payments to the LDCs have been decreasing, and many experts believe that only a massive formation of capital from within the third world itself will salvage its economy.[9] Such a massive capitalization seems unlikely. It cannot be taken out of the hides of the working people as it was in the USSR and the West because in the LDCs they are living so close to the subsistence level that they do not have it to give. The birth rate remains so high all over the third world that the growth in food production and the increase in industrial productivity cannot be devoted to capital formation but must be devoted to feeding the new children. In parts of Africa and Asia the birth rate so far exceeds economic growth that the net loss in per capita income is inevitable notwithstanding that growth. Doubtless, a transfer of some wealth from the developed countries to the LDCs would be helpful, but there are serious doubts that it could be in any way decisive. Even if such a transfer were massive enough, it is uncertain whether the leadership in many LDCs has either the desire or the competence to use the aid effectively to overcome the problems.[10]

The need to import food in many cases is aggravated by the rising price of petroleum. These requirements have led to an ever-increasing debt load for most of the LDCs, and many people think that the size of the burden is getting out of hand and will lead to considerable trouble.[11]

One example of the inefficacy of the use of foreign aid in a supportive way is provided by the conflict and famine at the Horn of Africa. The size of the economic aid the Americans supplied far, far outweighed that the Soviets delivered, and Soviet aid was provided on much less generous terms than was that from the United States. Despite all of that, the aid did not have much effect on the way things turned out. Ethiopia, Somalia, and the rest of the countries of the neighborhood seemed much more interested in security than in economics—or at least their leaders felt that way. For the present, anyhow, Ethiopia seems to be benefiting from Soviet military sponsorship and is apparently coming out ahead.[12] Ethiopia's experience seems particularly instructive for this study because the massive Soviet military aid seems to have been much more important than the economic help the United States rendered.

If there does not seem to be much utility in the supportive application of the economic instrument of policy in the LDC context, the coercive mode seems equally ineffective. We have put economic pressure on Cuba for many years, and though the Cuban economic record is not an impressive one that fact does not seem to have gained much for the United States in the political sense. While one-commodity economies are said to be especially vulnerable to pressure from the larger nations, most of the people of the LDCs are living by subsistence agriculture and are not at all affected by the status of the world trade. The use of US food surpluses in this mode does not hold much prospect for the solving of either US or third world problems. Firstly, the moral standards of many Americans would inhibit the use of food as a weapon; secondly, there are often alternate supplies of food available; and, finally, in any contest with the oil producers, the halting of the flow of oil would have earlier effects than the cutoff of food exports to the Middle East. The point for the air power decision maker is that though there does not seem to be a solution to LDC poverty in the offing, the supportive and coercive effects of the economic instruments of US policy do not seem to offer much promise of either alleviating the problem overseas or isolating the United States from the effects of the poverty. If, as many critics claim, the utility of the military instrument is declining, the same thing might be asserted about the economic instrument.

Though the agony of the third world is most manifest in its economic woes, it seems that the real root of the problem is in the social realm. Neither an agricultural nor an industrial revolution can take place without the formation of capital. But the thing that inhibits that formation is the runaway population growth in most parts of the developing world. Not only are there more mouths to feed, but the demographic pattern is such that a greater proportion of them belong to the very young than is the case in the developed world. These youths are consumers without being producers, a situation that further inhibits the savings that are prerequisite to an economic "takeoff."[13]

Any suggestion from the West that the problem lies within the LDCs themselves is likely to be met with outright rejection. Recommendations for population control are sometimes seen as a disguised form of genocide to perpetuate the neocolonialism that holds the LDCs in bondage. Assertions that the capital base for development has to come mainly from within the third world are dismissed with accusations of selfishness. Any number of analysts in the West assert that third world problems are not merely economic, but that they arise from deep cultural and psychological roots.[14] Among other things, the educational and scientific backwardness of most LDCs inhibits the success of another Marshall Plan.[15] Many countries recognize this, at least partly, and literacy is improving at an impressive rate but not as quickly as the population grows. In many areas, the first concern of the leadership is security from both internal and external threats. Money that would otherwise be going into research and education is being shot out of cannons—and perhaps necessarily so.

Many would argue that security must always be the first concern of any society, not just of the developing countries. Without security, neither economic nor cultural activity can progress in peace. Inasmuch as there has been a great political fragmentation taking place as a result of decolonization since 1945, there are many more political units than there used to be and many more real and potential conflicts. Of course, all of this is further inflamed by the continuing growth of nationalism and xenophobia. Many of the LDC leaders have an uncertain grip on the reins of power and must play to the galleries in xenophobic terms to upstage the internal opposition. We have ample evidence, without consulting Freud, that the American people seldom permit the rational problem-solving method to affect their decisions, and that phenomenon certainly applies equally (perhaps more so) to the LDCs.[16] Americans fancy themselves as great believers in the powers of education and science. However, in the case of the problems in their relationship with the third world, it is quite possible to believe that the LDCs will not be able to break free through self-education and that cultural dichotomies will forever prevent the United States either from helping solve the difficulty with education and technical aid or from isolating herself from third world woes by similar means.

Neither a benign world government nor enlightened cooperation within the state system offers much hope of helping the LDCs lift themselves from their agony. As the preconditions for economic and social uplift exist in but a minority of the LDCs, the idea of the reform coming from within is not realistic. Thus, it seems fair to assume that the economic and social problems of the third world are destined to persist and grow worse.

CRISES AND VIOLENCE

Because of the intractability of the problems of the LDCs, many analysts hold that the future will be filled with violent international crises. If the assumptions are true that political, economic, and technical measures will not solve the problems of the developing areas, then the reduction of options seems logically to lead to the conclusion that violence will be tried more and more. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) success is inspiring some of the other LDCs to attempt to organize cartels and the like; and though none has had the spectacular victories of the oil producers, they are nevertheless becoming a factor to be considered. Just as was the case with domestic labor unions during the industrialization of the United States, as soon as the international actors get organized they begin to offer less and less value for an ever greater cost; and that is bound to lead to crises between states.[17] The LDCs, it seems, will be more able to precipitate violent crises not only because of greater organization but also because of more effective armaments.

There has been a great proliferation of arms in the third world in the last 10 years and many of those arms are high-technology weapons. Though we can't be sure, a large proportion of the literature on the subject asserts that the new technology favors the defender more than the assailant.[18] Though some have doubted that a lonely Bolshevik infantryman will easily be able to neutralize a multimillion dollar airplane with a single, cheap, heat-seeking missile, the preponderance of writers do say that the LDCs will be able to act with a good deal more impunity than heretofore because low-cost precision-guided munitions (PGMs) will be a serious threat to expensive planes and ships.

As we have seen, no matter what happens, the pressures of population growth and diminishing resources may well combine with the increased ability of LDCs to make trouble. The political and cultural patterns extant in the LDCs exert hardly any restraint on that tendency, and many have assumed that there will be increased crises and violence in the decades ahead.[19] The Nixon Doctrine aimed to dissociate America somewhat from international violence and crisis. What are our chances of holding down our involvement in the LDC sea of troubles?

INTERDEPENDENCE

Most international relations scholars would say that there is no chance at all of the United States staying completely out of third world embroilments. The real debate has to do only with the degree of involvement, not with the assumption that we will be involved.

There is a minority view, principally among communications theory analysts, which holds that in a relative sense the US involvement in the overseas world has declined. These analysts argue that a comparison of the relative volume of internal communications to those with international actors shows that our overseas activity is a smaller percentage of our total activity than it was in the nineteenth century.

They also assert that the proportion of capital invested by the West in overseas activity compared to the domestic investment is smaller than it used to be. Further, the argument goes, the proportion of the gross national product (GNP) that arises from foreign trade is less now than it used to be.[20]

Notwithstanding those arguments, the vast weight of the literature holds that the United States is bound to become ever more interdependent with the countries of the third world. Certainly it is true that the United States has never before been so dependent on any imported material as she is on oil today. Further, it also seems inevitable that she will remain so dependent until the end of this century and that the dependency will have to cease sooner or later as the oil supplies run out. For the time being, though, the United States has a vital interest in the oil of the Middle East, and that poses special problems for the military power of America. The sources of the oil are much closer to the Soviet Union than they are to us and their protection is vital to security. Further, the lines of communication from those oil resources to Japan, Europe, and the United States pass through several vital narrow seas and are highly subject to interdiction by either the Soviet Union or any number of LDCs.[21] Moreover, the income for the OPEC countries has been far more than they can absorb. They have consequently been holding back on production on the one hand, and investing their "petrodollars" in the developed world on the other. This investing, as the freezing of the Iranian funds during the hostage crisis beginning in 1979 showed, creates another dependency.[22] Moreover, the more conservative Arabs know that their economic health depends on avoiding a complete collapse of the Western economies, and in some cases their security depends on the continuing flow of Western arms. Thus, there can hardly be any question that US security and economic well-being will be affected by Middle Eastern affairs for the next couple of decades, at least.

Other raw materials are not generally as critical to US well-being as is petroleum. The sources of supply are more widespread in many cases, there are more alternate routes to them, and substitutes are more readily found for many of the other materials than is the case for liquid energy. Moreover, some minerals and the like are obtained overseas because the extraction costs there are less than they are in North America, and in a pinch, we can obtain them at home, though at a higher cost.[23] Thus, even though some would argue that our security is not utterly dependent upon the suppliers of nonpetroleum raw materials, it is nonetheless true that the cutoff of some of them would have serious implications for our economic prosperity.

Still, whatever our dependency on LDC suppliers, they, too, are dependent upon us for markets and sources of food and finished goods. Very often, the single-commodity LDC is more reliant on us than we are on it. Its exports of coffee, say, constitute a much larger proportion of its GNP than our exports of manufactured goods to that country are of our total GNP. In any case, even if coffee or some other material is not vital to our security, and even if our foreign trade is not much larger in relative terms than it used to be, it is nonetheless true that the United States has enough economic woes as it is without wishing for the loss of *any* overseas markets. Of course in absolute terms, world trade has grown by leaps and bounds since the end of World War II.

The growth in world commerce is matched by the proliferation of the number of nation-states as a result of decolonization. As we have seen, these newly independent states are typically very jealous of their sovereignty. They are neither steeped in nor committed to the finer points of Western international law. The United States, Europe, and Japan are much more dependent upon foreign trade than are either the USSR or the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The law of the sea has been evolving away from the traditional freedom of the seas doctrine towards a much more restrictive regime. Already, the extension of territorial waters out from the traditional 3 miles to 12 miles has been generally accepted.[24] The Strait of Gibraltar is but 9 miles across. The Strait of Malacca, the exit to the Red Sea, the passage out of the Persian Gulf, and the sea route between Denmark and Sweden are all fewer than 24 miles across. Of course, the seafaring powers assert the right of innocent passage through all these waters, but that did not help much in the case of the SS *Mayaguez*.

In short, the ingredients we have here are a recipe for both involvement and trouble with those LDCs facing the narrow seas through which our commerce must pass. Moreover, the 12-mile limit does not appear to be the end of the story. Many nations are now pushing for a 200-mile economic zone (which presently will permit free passage), but it is hard to say where that movement will wind up. Further, the landlocked states are demanding a share of the riches of the seabed by virtue of their nationhood, but only the United States and the Soviet Union have any real capabilities to exploit the materials lying there.[25] One has only to think back to the extent to which US Air Force and Navy air power were deployed in the attempt to solve the *Mayaguez* crisis or to the recent "Cod War" between Iceland and the United Kingdom to draw some unhappy inferences for the future. Look at the Aegean Sea, for example. There is hardly a spot in it that is more than 12 miles from the shore of one Greek island or another. Yet, it has been a main highway of civilization since the time of Alexander and Xerxes and before. Now, it seems that it and many other areas of the world are about to be legally closed off at just the time that impoverished LDCs are acquiring the cheap technology in weapons that will make them capable of enforcing their will against seaborne traffic. As air power can go some places impossible for both sea and land forces, insofar as this combination of law and technology further restricts the old mobility enjoyed by naval forces, perhaps air movement will be able to compensate somewhat for the loss. Still, the continuing technological revolution in both communications and transportation seems destined to involve us in these and many other third world troubles.

Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that domestic political factors will also lead to continuing involvement among the LDCs. The black African nations and Israel, for example, have constituencies within the United States that have important impacts on national elections. Similar groups have traditionally complicated our relations with various European states, and now they are having their effect in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.[26] In the first case, the air power planner must be concerned not only for the energy difficulties entailed for the American economy, but even for the fuel supplies of the combat forces in time of war. In the latter case, it is not hard to imagine scenarios where the use of firepower (or the threat of firepower) to secure the interests of the United States would bring domestic charges of racism. Whatever one thinks of alien interests driving the policy of the United States, the planner must learn to live with those constraints because of the requirement for a public consensus in support of any policy—or at least public acquiescence.

American policymakers and planners can hardly expect any Soviet sympathy for their problems arising from this interdependence with the third world. Of course, the massive Soviet merchant marine and fishing fleets give the Soviets a vested interest in the freedom of the seas, and perhaps this will be a help in a few conflicts. But, in general, most writers seem to think that the Soviets separate the notions of détente in Europe and the "need" to support "national liberation" movements and "progressive governments" in the third world. Most analysts seem to think that the Soviets will continue to make trouble for the United States wherever they can without undue risk.[27]

At the same time, the Soviet capability for making trouble seems to be improving. The Soviet air force and Aeroflot airlift forces showed what they could do in Ethiopia in 1978 by way of a power projection exercise somewhat removed from former Soviet practice. There has been a great improvement in Soviet naval forces in the past 10 years or so, and some insist that the intention is to use them to assert the Soviet will in noncontiguous areas. Some analysts question this, saying that the buildup was a countermeasure against US attack carriers and nuclear submarines, and others argue that it was only the bureaucratic momentum of a system that has been building as many armaments as it could since the early 1930s.[28] The appearance of the new *Kiev*-class carriers is a bit worrisome, but there is room to wonder whether the mission of those four ships is antisubmarine warfare (ASW) or power projection. Their aircraft, the Yak-36 Forgers, could clearly be useful in the former role, but so many of the third world countries have competent fixed-wing fighters that could outclass the Forger (or any other vertical-take-off fighter) that one must reserve judgment on the power projection business. The *Kievs* are no match for the US attack carriers, but there is evidence that the Soviets are building a large-deck, nuclear-powered attack carrier.[29] That being true, and if they build some more of the *Ivan Rogov*-class 12,000-ton amphibious ships, it will be a powerful indicator that the intent is indeed power projection. Presently, according to Michael McGwire,[30] the Soviet power projection capability is limited to contiguous and nearby areas, but they still can make plenty of trouble there and in more distant places through supplying arms and advisers and through supporting surrogates and revolutionary movements. However limited, though, some analysts are saying that the growing USSR domestic, economic, and social woes and the possibility of future Soviet energy shortfalls, combined with the rumblings of discontent among the satellites, strongly tend to make the Soviets lash out with their only remaining instrument that *is* still in good shape—the military.[31]

Again, for purposes of this study, though, it seems best to adopt the most common assumption: that the Soviets will make trouble for the United States wherever they can in the third world, but that they will continue to avoid direct confrontations with US military forces. For the American planner that is quite enough to worry about, whatever our degree of interdependence.

During the benign Victorian years, people said that the Industrial Revolution made the world utterly interdependent and that it was one of the big factors that made war and conflict obsolete. After all, the Zollverein, a European economic federation, had so created economic interdependence among the many Germanies that that cockpit of external violence had finally been made peaceful. Even the horrors of the trenches of 1914–18 and the holocaust of World War II did not kill that idea. One of the prime motivators behind the European coal and steel community of the years right after World War II was the idea that it, and the common market that followed it, would create an economic unity that would make a political unity inevitable; but we are still waiting for that political unity to follow in what was to have been a United States of Europe. By now, the world is more cynical—or at least skeptical. True, there are still many who insist that the building of international institutions, trade, and cultural exchanges will lead to eternal peace,[32] but there seem to be more who feel that interdependence can just as easily lead to violence as to peace—as it did in 1914 and, they say, as it will for the United States and the third world in the future.[33] Another potential source of violence in LDCs is held to be the great growth of arms transfers during the last twenty or thirty years.

DIFFUSING ADVANCED ARMS TO LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)

There seems to be trouble ahead in the third world. Much of that world is already heavily armed, and much of that armament is of the latest generations. There have been some movements towards restraining the growth of arms supplies among the LDCs and some attempts to limit their modernization. Though these attempts have often been motivated by idealism, or perhaps especially because they were so motivated, they have been uniformly disappointing. It seems that the upward spiral of arms transfers to the third world will continue and that there is not very much we can do about it. This could mean that the political and economic troubles that lie between us and the end of the century are to be aggravated and made more bloody by the ready availability of advanced armaments.

One of the greatest political changes since World War II has been the decolonization of the third world and the disappearance of the great European empires. Associated with that has been the appearance of a host of new nation-states and a tremendous rise in the shipment of arms from the developed world to the developing world. Since the end of World War II, the United States has been the world's largest arms exporter. Although her supplies to Europe have declined as the European arms industries recovered from the war, shipments to the third world have been increasing as more of the former colonies become independent and start to rise above the subsistence level. The United States has sent more than $100 billion worth of arms and associated support overseas since the Second World War, and her annual shipments are now around $9 billion.[34] The Soviets came onto the LDC arms market somewhat later than did the Americans, but their exports have been increasing rapidly. Neither have the Soviets spread their military assistance as widely as have the Americans, concentrating a good proportion of it in Africa, and especially in the Middle East. The African example, because the poverty is as bad there as anywhere and because it is one of the most dangerous potential trouble spots, is instructive.[35] (See table 1.)

The Soviet industrial plant, or at least the military part of it, has matured and the arms are available for export. The USSR needs to import advanced technology and, sometimes, agricultural products; and the arms sales bring in hard currency that can be used for these purposes. Around the time of the Cuban missile crisis, the Soviets apparently made the conscious decision to transition from a continental to a global power. This entailed a drive for nuclear parity with the United States and the building of a "blue water" navy. That navy requires port facilities in foreign lands even more than does the US Navy, and that factor tends to involve the USSR in the third world more than heretofore. After de-Stalinization, the People's Republic of China and the USSR began their long feud. Lately that has been extended to parts of the third world, especially Africa; thus, the Soviets sometimes get involved in localities merely because the Chinese are there. The Soviets have been assigned various motives for their new activity in the less-developed parts of the world. Of course, anti-imperialism was basic to the Leninist ideology from the outset. Often, the Soviets have found even the most reactionary regimes in the third world acceptable on the grounds of their anticolonialism: he who is an enemy of my enemy (capitalists) must be my friend. Perhaps the Marxist "inevitable" struggle with the capitalists on the Northern European plain was deemed too dangerous, thus the contest had to be shifted to another arena. Though the Soviet economy presently is more autarkic than is that of the United States, there are troubles ahead in terms of raw material supplies, and Soviet expansion into the third world may have some economic grounds. Perhaps the whole effort is only a continuation of the old imperial Russian colonialism that opportunistically advanced where possible and retreated where necessary. Whatever the motivations, though, many would agree that in Africa, "Soviet policy . . . seems clearly designed to stimulate armed conflict and radicalize African politics."[36]

For a long time, the USSR was able to compete with the United States for arms markets with certain advantages. Of course, its armaments had less frills and were, in some ways, more suited to the harsh environments of many parts of the third world than were those of the industrialized West. More importantly, however, the Soviets offered the arms at discounted prices and on very favorable credit terms. During the last few years, though, they have found it necessary to bring up the prices and charge more realistic interest rates for the credit extended.[37] Possibly, these rate hikes have been motivated by the increasing need for hard currency earnings required for purchases in the West and by the complaints of managers of the domestic economy that the arms spending was being done at the expense of the production of consumer goods for the Soviet people themselves—which became another high-priority item when Khrushchev came to power.

Table 1
Numbers of Weapons Delivered by Major Suppliers
to Africa (Sub-Saharan)[1]

Weapons Category	*United States*	*USSR*	*Major Western European*[2]
1974-1977			
Tanks and Self-Propelled Guns	34	785	55
Artillery	219	2,845	355
APCs* and Armored Cars	33	1,145	265
Major Surface Combatants	0	2	2
Minor Surface Combatants	0	26	46
Submarines	0	0	0
Supersonic Combat Aircraft	9	180	65
Subsonic Combat Aircraft	0	75	10
Other Aircraft	2	25	150
Helicopters	6	40	90
Guided Missile Boats	0	2	0
Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs)	0	1,100	105
1978-1981			
Tanks and Self-Propelled Guns	0	770	40
Artillery	56	2,040	170
APCs and Armored Cars	43	1,155	840
Major Surface Combatants	0	4	15
Minor Surface Combatants	0	35	20
Submarines	0	0	0
Supersonic Combat Aircraft	12	160	5
Subsonic Combat Aircraft	0	50	30
Other Aircraft	38	55	90
Helicopters	0	110	95
Guided Missile Boats	0	4	1
SAMs	0	1,075	5
1974-1981			
Tanks and Self-Propelled Guns	34	1,555	95
Artillery	275	4,885	525
APCs and Armored Cars	76	2,300	1,105
Major Surface Combatants	0	6	17
Minor Surface Combatants	0	61	66
Submarines	0	0	0
Supersonic Combat Aircraft	21	340	70
Subsonic Combat Aircraft	0	125	40
Other Aircraft	40	80	240
Helicopters	6	150	185
Guided Missile Boats	0	6	1
SAMs	0	2,175	110

[1] US data are for fiscal years given (and cover the period from 1 July 1973 through 30 September 1981). Foreign data are for calendar years given.

[2] Major Western European includes France, United Kingdom, West Germany, and Italy totals as an aggregate figure.

*Armored personnel carrier.

Source: US Government.

Another motivation for raising the prices might have been that the arms transfer policy had run into some disheartening frustrations. The Indonesians had long been clients of Khrushchev's USSR when, in the early sixties, the establishment there decided to put down their local Communist movement, and they used Soviet arms to massacre thousands of the Indonesian ideological kin of the Soviets. From the mid-fifties, the Soviets had made large investments in the form of arms, among other things, in Egypt. In a classical demonstration of the difficulty in translating arms transfers into usable political power in the third world, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat decided in 1972 to eject the Soviet influence; and notwithstanding domestic opposition, eject it he did.

One would have thought Sadat's action would have stimulated a qualitative change in the Soviet third world policy, but the reaction was only to tighten terms and raise prices. Perhaps it illustrates an idea that goes all the way back to Alfred Thayer Mahan and beyond: authoritarian societies can react more quickly and persistently than can pluralist ones. The experience with Egypt did not force a change in either Soviet Middle East policy or her third world opportunism. In the years that immediately followed, the Soviets continued their adventures in sub-Saharan Africa and did what they could to maintain their influence in the radical parts of the Arab world: Syria, Iran, Lybia, and Algeria.

Since World War II the United States, statistically speaking, has been the largest arms exporter in the world. Of course, a part of that monopoly has been because of the momentum she had when she came out of the war, for she had been the "arsenal of democracy" during those years, supplying massive arms to all members of the Grand Alliance and almost single-handedly equipping the forces fighting the Pacific part of the war. The onset of the cold war and formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came so soon in the wake of the Second World War that the initial equipment of the Atlantic Alliance was made up of stock left over from World War II. The Western European industrial plant, not to mention that of the Japanese, was so decimated that if there were to be arms at all they had to come from America. As European and Japanese manufacturers got back on their feet and as changing technology required the reequipping of Allied armed forces, US suppliers began to send less of their output to developed areas and more to the LDCs—where demand was increasing because of their newfound nationhood and because of the increase of oil revenues in the Middle East and a few other places. Further, the Congress and many other Americans became less enthusiastic for the effectiveness of foreign economic and military aid and less inclined towards grants than they had been in the cold war. For a time, the coming of détente made it seem less imperative that the United States compete with the USSR for favor among the LDCs.

One of the outcomes of the Vietnam War was the Nixon Doctrine, whereby the US presence in the overseas world (aside from Japan, Israel, and the NATO area) was to be reduced. Consequently, the arms flow was shifted to the third world and put more on a cash basis than it had been during the fifties and sixties.[38] A corollary of the Nixon Doctrine, however, was that as the United States reduced her own units deployed to the third world areas, those places would not be denied the wherewithal to defend themselves, even if they were required to fund their defense through cash or credit rather than the old grants.

There has been an ongoing debate in American foreign policy at least since the end of World War II between the "realists" or "traditionalists" on the one hand and the "idealists" or "behavioralists" on the other. At the risk of some oversimplification, those categories might be loosely identified with the Theodore Roosevelt tradition on the "realist" side and the Wilsonian heritage on the "idealist" end of things. The postwar debate was triggered in part by the writings of George F. Kennan and Robert E. Osgood,[39] who looked back to World War I and the interwar period and complained that the Americans had too great a tendency to take a moralistic approach to the detriment of a healthy self-interest in their making of foreign policy.

According to some of his critics, the arms transfer policy of President Jimmy Carter was firmly grounded in the ideals of the Wilsonian tradition—and that was part of the trouble. President Carter came to office and immediately instituted efforts to cut down the flow of arms to the third world and to do so, in the first instance, through the power of unilateral self-restraint. These efforts, according to his critics, were founded in several faulty assumptions. First, there was the notion that arms per se are the cause of violence and war, and consequently the denial of arms to third world regions would reduce the chances of human conflict. Second, the Soviets and the Western Europeans, who supply most of the arms not sent by the United States, were assumed to agree that arms were the cause of war and that if the United States would restrict its shipments then the others would be moved to follow suit. The plan implemented at the outset of the Carter administration and founded on those assumptions provided that the United States

1. would set an annual dollar ceiling for the transfer of US arms to areas other than NATO, Korea, and some other exceptions (the ceiling would be lowered with each succeeding year),
2. would not introduce new weapons into any region,
3. would require that the arms manufacturers coordinate promotion efforts overseas with the US government at the beginning of each operation,
4. would not permit the manufacture of weapon systems exclusively for the export market,
5. would not deliver new arms to third world forces before deploying such arms with the US armed services,
6. would make coproduction arrangements with third world powers without a presidential exemption (such exemptions were to be permitted with most of the restraints listed above), and
7. would undertake negotiations with the Soviet Union and other foreign arms suppliers to win multilateral agreement to these restraints.[40]

Implicit assumptions also underlay the Carter policy. One was that, though the first and second worlds were heavily armed and had legitimate reasons for being so, those two worlds were more superior judges of the security requirements of the third world than the LDCs were themselves. Another assumption was that high-technology weapons were more destabilizing than older armaments.

Critics soon attacked both the assumptions and the implementation of the policy, and the experience of the ensuing months seemed to bear out their criticisms. They held that the increase in the shipment of conventional arms to a status quo power could clearly lead to stability, rather than instability, in some regions of the third world.[41] Further, there was nothing inherent in a new weapon system that made it better for aggression than for defense. Certainly, old tanks could conceivably be more useful for starting wars than modern air defense systems installed to defend an LDC's capital. Over the long term, the history of the West's ability to keep the peace among its own peoples does not inspire much confidence that it knows better than do the LDCs what level of armaments is the best for security. Further, as the period since the end of World War II has been one of the longest stretches of peace that the European continent has ever enjoyed, and as one can make a solid argument that it was the balance of rather abundant arms that made it so, one might be inclined to assert that the denial of the flow of arms will not necessarily promote peace in the third world. Finally, critics claimed that cooperation was not to be anticipated from either the Soviets or our European allies—and the experience showed that this was so. In those few cases where the Carter administration did not use one exemption or another to prevent the implementation of the restraints, the Europeans and the Soviets moved in to supply whatever markets the United States had refused to supply.

The Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) negotiations were undertaken at the end of 1977 in response to the positions of our European allies, who had said they could not consider imposing restraints on themselves unless they could be sure the Soviets would join the movement with similar restraints. The USSR consented to the negotiations, but no progress was ever made toward agreement. The stumbling block seemed to be that the Soviets were attempting to use the negotiations to cause the United States to deny the PRC any arms help while avoiding any similar concession on their own part.[42] This "realist" critique argued that in the absence of a concession of the future to communism, the logical complement to the Nixon Doctrine had to be a policy of fairly free-flowing arms to the third world.

What does this arms control effort mean for the future of the third world? First, there will be no decline in demand for conventional armaments among the LDCs. Second, that demand will find plenty of suppliers among the Western Europeans, the Soviet Union, and even the People's Republic of China. Thus, the arms stocks of many of the LDCs will grow in number and sophistication. Nothing the United States can do will prevent those developments; therefore, if the United States opts out of the market, she will have even less control over the future. This is not to imply that the ability to control events lies in adopting the role of supplier to third world clients. Nonetheless, it is clear that such an involvement can indeed affect events and that the Soviet Union has a high opinion of the power of such a policy.[43]

Even after the Soviet disappointments in Indonesia, the Sudan, and Egypt, they have continued to supply arms to various regimes in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and even Latin America, and to build up their power projection ability, including airlift forces. All of this has been widely cited as destabilizing and conducive to war and all manner of violence, but it may not always be so. NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Taiwan and the PRC, and North and South Korea have been glowering across their mutual borders, armed to the teeth, for years—yet there have been no wars in those regions since the mid-fifties. Further, some have argued that ample arms shipments to the LDCs may actually be conducive to peace and the limitation of violence, not only because a kind of regional balance of terror might deter war, but also because such conventional armaments might preempt any movement towards the LDCs' acquisition of nuclear arms.[44]

Another point worth pondering is that the West has taken a good deal of criticism from the third world in the United Nations and elsewhere for its imperialism of bygone years. But the last of these great European empires expired in the mid-seventies when the Portuguese departed Africa. It seems almost axiomatic that developing nations require an external whipping boy to distract the citizenry from the troubles of the hour.[45] The Soviets have an imperialist history beside which that of the United States pales into insignificance. The Soviets are continuing to do those things which the old imperialists used to do, no matter by what name they describe those activities. The abuse of the old Western colonialists, the built-in need among the LDCs for some sort of "foreign devil," and the growing visibility of the USSR in the third world may mean that the new arms will be turned against them more and more often. Perhaps this will ultimately cause them to move towards a real policy of controlling the arms flow, and that *might* break the logjam in CAT negotiations.

Whether or not high levels of arms are conducive to violence in the third world, it seems clear that if such violence does break out, the technical capability exists among the developing nations to make it much more bloody and expensive than they could have heretofore. It is equally clear that the level and modernity of their supply of arms has reduced the advantage the West formerly enjoyed in conflicts with the LDCs and that if such violence does break out, then there is a considerable chance it will be more difficult for the United States to prevail and to limit the geographic scope of the conflict.

All in all, then, it seems fair to assume

1. that the arms race in the third world will continue,
2. that the United States and the USSR will not be able to escape involvement, and
3. that the dangers of such a race and superpower involvement may not be as great as some have held.

The dilemma is that we cannot be sure the arms race will be destabilizing; if it is, then the conflicts will be more violent and widespread than they have been in the past. Thus, foreign military sales (FMS) are one more imponderable that will complicate the making of US policy. Arms transfers are supposed to aid in the maintenance of US national security, peace, and prosperity. As the experience with Iran from 1979–81 demonstrates, this is not always so.

If the arms in the hands of third world powers are bound to increase in number and sophistication, and if there is no end in sight to the arms competition between the superpowers, then what is the utility of those arms? What can they do for the achievement of national objectives? Can they do anything? Those questions are the subject of the next section.

UTILITY OF MILITARY POWER

If we assume that the problems of the third world will get worse, that early solutions will not be found, that violent crises will be frequent, and that the United States will not be able to dissociate herself from those crises, then how can America prepare to preserve her interests in the face of these possible disasters? The economic instrument seems to hold little promise in that regard. The *Mayaguez* crisis, the Iranian hostage experience, and the failure of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) to inhibit Soviet armament growth (among many other things) suggest that we cannot place much faith either in treaties or international law. Right or wrong, the United States, formerly the great anticolonial force, has now inherited the mantle of the West's great imperial powers (in the eyes of the greater part of the ideologues of the third world). Moreover, this country is widely perceived among the LDCs as a place where the streets are paved with gold and as a nation that extracted her marvelous wealth from the carcasses of helpless colonial peoples. These perceptions, plus the inherent difficulties in transcultural communication, make it reasonable to assume that the psychological instrument will never be more than an aid to policy. If neither politics, economics, nor psychology can be expected to help much, what then can we expect of the military instrument?

> An understanding of Clausewitz's theory of war requires strategic planners to avoid, at all costs, the temptation to exaggerate the correlation between military effort and political results. The idea that the resort to violence can be in any sense surgical or precise is one of the most mistaken and dangerous propositions of our own times.[46]

That statement, by one of America's bright, young strategic thinkers, is more or less typical of a vast literature that concentrates on the limitations of the utility of military force. That trend of thought goes back at least to the senseless stalemate in the trenches of World War I; it received a huge impetus from the coming of nuclear weapons and the disillusionment with the outcome of World War II, and reached its zenith as a result of the stalemate in Korea and the defeat in Vietnam. The very title of some of the most important books in the field illustrate the point: *Force Without War, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, The Limits of Military Intervention*.[47]

The general notion of the literature concerned with limiting military force is that nuclear weapons make war at the highest level unthinkable, which results in a "balance of terror" stalemate. Because no decision can ever be achieved there, the standoff is reflected down to the lower levels of conflict, making stalemates the best possible outcome wherever the two superpowers have an important interest. Of course, Korea and Vietnam provide the obvious examples. The onward march of technology, meanwhile, has made war so terribly expensive in terms of both lives and material even at the lowest levels, that even where something positive might be achieved, the effects can never be worth the costs. Military power, writers say, cannot be dispensed with, however, because its passive effects are still vital. It cannot be used in war or coercion, but it must be maintained to preserve deterrence. It cannot be used for offense or intervention, but it must be maintained in case other peoples do not understand these things and try to attack us. Further, if military power can seldom be used in an active way, then relatively speaking, national policy must rely more on the economic and political instruments.

One of the problems with this preoccupation with the limits of power is that its effects have been asymmetrical. The writing on the subject is almost wholly Western in origin.[48] It is clear from the continuing USSR strategic and conventional military buildups and from the great growth in third world arms imports that others have a higher regard for the worth of arms than do many Americans.

As the Vietnam War recedes into the past, some American writers are beginning to hedge on their former theories about the disutility of arms. Klaus Knorr, whose 1966 book was one of the classics of the disutility literature,[49] has lately been writing that he was a bit off the mark earlier. He still says that the practical active uses of force for the superpowers are limited in number, but that does not mean that violence will decline in the future. Knorr sees more and more violence in the third world and suggests that perhaps the superpowers will often get involved in that violence against their wills.[50] Of course, all these authors hold that the deterrent and defensive uses of force are as important as ever before. Many of them argue, though, that the stalemate at the nuclear superpower level makes the violent use of arms among the LDCs (by the LDCs) all the more practical and that the third world is beginning to realize this.[51] The new oil wealth in the third world comes at a particularly unfortunate time from that point of view. It enables many LDCs to purchase high-technology arms, which some of them pass on to less-wealthy compatriots. The effect, as we have seen, is a vast diffusion of real military power to many unstable areas.[52]

Whatever the disutility for the superpowers' active use of military forces, the seizure of people, embassies, and ships, and events in Lebanon and Grenada are only a few recent examples where intervention might be required. Even where direct intervention is inhibited for the superpowers, the success of the Soviets in using their Cuban surrogates in Africa may well stimulate more violence of that sort—and even if the United States does not try similar strategies, those of the USSR are likely to require a response from America.[53]

Summing up, then, we shall approach the chapters that follow with the following assumptions:

1. There are serious problems ahead for the third world countries to which they are not likely to find real solutions and with which the free and Communist worlds will be either unwilling or unable to help.
2. Violent crises will continue among the LDCs from which the United States and the rest of the West will be unable to insulate themselves.
3. Economic, political, and psychological instruments will not suffice to protect Western interests and, generally, will decline in their effectiveness.
4. Though retaining utility in the achievement of political goals, military power—land-based air power included—is more constrained than it was before World War II; nevertheless, it is more effective than ever in its deterrent and defensive roles and remains the basic coin of international relations.
5. Irrespective of all probable ramifications, the diffusion of advanced arms to LDCs will continue.

Since there appears to be general agreement that the most likely location for crises involving the United States is in the third world, we now turn our attention to a general overview of the land-based air power used during US-third world conflicts. One might divide third world crisis typology into three categories as shown below. At the simple end of the spectrum would be a crisis between the United States acting alone on one side and a sole third world state on the other. The intermediate type would consist of a superpower in the company of a client versus another third world actor unaccompanied by a powerful patron. Finally, there would be the complex, involving the United States and a client on one side, and the USSR with her client on the other. The interests of a number of peripheral actors might also be involved.

THIRD WORLD CRISIS TYPOLOGY

Category	Parties Involved	Example
Simple	United States *vs.* LDC	*Mayaguez* Crisis
Intermediate	United States plus Client *vs.* Adversary LDC	Congo Crises
Complex	United States plus Client *vs.* Adversary LDC plus USSR	Yom Kippur War

In the chapters that follow, we address four crises occurring in the third world in which US land-based air power has played vital roles. Specifically, we examine the *Mayaguez* crisis, the Bay of Pigs incident, the Yom Kippur War and the crises in sub-Saharan Africa. We analyze the efficacy, potential, and limitations of land-based air power in each crisis, and we present tentative conclusions and some recommendations for force structure development and the formulation of employment concepts for crises.

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NOTES

CHAPTER 2

1. Robert W. Tucker, "The Conduct of American Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 58 (1980): 449–84.

2. United States, Department of State and Council on Environmental Quality, *The Global 2000 Report to the President* 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980), 1.

3. Ibid., 2–25; Ambassador John P. Walsh, "Energy Issues and Time Availabilities," *Air University Review* 32 (November–December 1980): 17.

4. Guy J. Pauker, *The Military Implications of a Possible World Order Crisis in the 1980s* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Report R-2003-AF, November 1977), 44–51.

5. Karl W. Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 270–75. Deutsch points to India and China as contradictions for the dependency theory—they have little involvement in world trade and yet they remain as poor as the rest of the LDCs.

6. Daniel Bell, "The Future World Disorder: The Structural Context of Crisis," *Foreign Policy* 27 (Summer 1977): 109–35. Bell argues that some of the economic, technical, and demographic problems are too big for the conventional nation state; others are too localized and specialized in nature for the nation states. Consequently, he argues, we are going to have to shore up both international and local institutions if we are to find a way out.

7. Charles O. Lerce and Abdul A. Said, *Concepts of International Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 194; Parker, *Military Implications*, viii.

8. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York: Norton, 1969), 264.

9. Pauker, *Military Implications*, 62; P. T. Bauer and B. Yamey, "Against the New Economic Order," *Commentary 63* (April 1977): 25–31.

10. William B. Young, *The Impact of the Third World* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1976), 7; Bauer and Yamey, "Against the New Economic Order," 29.

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12. Steven David, "Realignment in the Horn: The Soviet Advantage," *International Security* 4 (Fall 1979): 82–84.

13. Bell, "The Future World Disorder," 124.

14. Adda B. Boseman, "War and the Clash of Ideas," *Orbis* 20 (Spring 1976): 77; Bauer and Yamey, "Against the New Order,"27.

15. Don D. Humphrey, "The Idea (or fiction) of Equality Among Men and Nations," *Orbis* 20 (Spring 1976): 242.

16. Deutsch, *Analysis of International Relations*, 260.

17. Ibid., 285.

18. Michael J. Deane, "The Soviet Assessment of the Correlation of World Forces: Implications for American Foreign Policy," *Orbis* 20 (Fall 1976): 634: Lewis S. Sorley, "Technology, Mobility and Conventional Warfare," in *The Limits of Military Intervention*, ed. Ellen P. Stern (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977), 190; James F. Digby, "New Weapons Technology and its Impact on Intervention," in *The Limits of Military Intervention*, ed. Ellen P. Stern, (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977), 121.

19. Lewis A. Frank, "The Decision to Respond: What Forces Do We Need in a Crisis?" *Air University Review* 26 (March–April 1975): 16–26; Klaus Knorr, "On the International Uses of Military Force in the Contemporary World," *Orbis* 21 (Spring 1977): 26.

20. Deutsch, *Analysis of International Relations*, 256; Tucker, "The Conduct of American Policy," 479. Tucker argues that there are big regions of the third world that are simply irrelevant to the United States in terms of both politics and economics.

21. Brig Gen Edward B. Atkenson, US Army, "International Crises and the Evolution of Strategy and Forces," *Military Review* 55 (October 1975): 50–54; Melvin A. Conant, "The Global Impact of Energy on US Security Interests," in *Evolving Strategic Realities: Implications for US Policymakers*, ed. Franklin Margiotta (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1980), 59–72; Lt Col Joseph A. Breen, "Energy, America and the Military," *Air University Review* 32 (November–December 1980): 42–55.

22. Herman F. Eilts, "Security Considerations in the Persian Gulf," *International Security* 5 (Fall 1980): 86.

23. Yuan-li Wu, *Raw Material Supply in a Multipolar World* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1973). This short and readable book is a handy survey of the entire problem.

24. Dr Shahram Chubin, "Naval Competition in South-West Asia," *Adelphi Paper* 127 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1976): 29; Pauker, *Military Implications*, 52–57.

25. Michael McGwire, "Changing Naval Operations and Military Intervention," in *The Limits of Military Intervention*, ed. Ellen P. Stern (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977), 157–58.

26. Paul H. B. Godwin and Lewis B. Ware, "Linkage Politics and Coercive Diplomacy: A Comparative Analysis of Two Lebanese Crises," *Air University Review* 28 (November–December 1976): 81–89; Eilts, "Security Considerations," 87.

27. Roger Hamburg, "Soviet Perspectives on Military Intervention," in *The Limits of Military Intervention*, ed. Ellen P. Stern (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977), 74; Edward N. Luttwak, "The Strategy of Inaction," in *The Third World: Premises of US Policy*, ed. W. Scott Thompson (San Francisco, Calif.: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1978), 177–82.

28. Keith A. Dunn, "Power Projection or Influence: Soviet Capabilities for the 1980s," *Naval War College Review* 32 (September–October 1980): 3–37.

29. Ibid., 37.

30. McGwire, "Changing Naval Operations," 160–62.

31. "Twilight of Communism?," *US News and World Report*, 22 December 1980, 27–32.

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34. Linda P. Brady and Llan Peleg, "Carter's Policy on the Supply of Conventional Weapons: Cultural Origins and Diplomatic Consequences," *Crossroads: International Dynamics & Social Change* 3 (Winter 1980): 49.

35. Richard Deutsch, "The African Arms Race," *Africa Report* 24 (1979): 47–49.

36. House Committee on International Relations, *The Soviet Union and the Third World: A Watershed in Great Power Policy?*, 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, 87.

37. Ibid., 71.

38. Brady and Peleg, "Carter's Policy on the Supply of Weapons," 49.

39. George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Robert E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

40. US Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Review of Arms Transfer Policy*, 6 March 1980.

41. Withholding arms from the Loyalist (legitimate government) side of the nonintervention policy of the Spanish civil-war days certainly did nothing to discourage Falangist, Fascist, or Nazi aggression.

42. Richard Betts, "The Tragicomedy of Arms Trade Control," *International Security* 5 (Summer 1980): 80–110. The Soviet proposal was that both sides agree not to provide arms to nations on the borders of the other superpower. Of course there was little need for Mexico or Canada to arm themselves against the United States, but the possibility of the PRC requiring such arms was far more real. Brady and Peleg, "Carter's Policy on the Supply of Weapons," 41–68.

43. House, *The Soviet Union and the Third World*, 150.

44. Brady and Peleg, "Carter's Policy on the Supply of Weapons," 57.

45. Recall, for example, the nineteenth-century history of the United States when a very popular road to election at all levels was through the denigration of the British. Though British interests were most often parallel to those of the United States from the War of 1812 onward, they were the most visible of the European nations in the New World because of the Royal Navy and because of their possession of Canada. Consequently, they became the most convenient and credible target for abuse.

46. Thomas H. Etzold, "Clausewitzian Lessons for Modern Strategists," *Air University Review* 31 (May–June 1980): 28.

47. For a fuller discussion, see Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1978); Alexander L. George, Davis K. Hall, and William R. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1971); Digby in *The Limits of Military Intervention*, ed. Ellen P. Stern (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977).

48. Knorr, "On the International Uses of Military Forces," 27.

49. For a fuller discussion, see Knorr, *On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966).

50. Klaus Knorr, "Is International Coercion Waning or Rising?" *International Security* 1 (Spring 1977): 92–110.

51. Robert J. Art, "To What Ends Military Power," *International Security* 4 (Spring 1980): 11; Comdr James A. Barber, "Military Force and Nonmilitary Threats," *Military Review* 55 (February 1975): 5.

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53. Avigdor Haselkorn, "Soviet Military Casualties in Third World Conflicts," *Conflict* 2 (1980): 73–86.

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CHAPTER 3

THE *MAYAGUEZ* INCIDENT: SIMPLE CRISIS

The crisis typology used in this study identified three types of conflict involving interactions among superpowers, clients, and LDCs. The typology defined the least complex limit as a conflict between the United States on one hand and a third world power, unassisted, on the other. The *Mayaguez* crisis of May 1975 is offered as an example of that limit.

The *Mayaguez* literature is very limited compared to, say, that of the Yom Kippur crisis. The Soviets were not involved in the crisis at all, and the People's Republic of China (PRC), as far as is known, played only a very minor role.[1] The secretary general of the United Nations got into the proceedings, but only for a very short time and in a very minor way—and without discernible effect. The Cambodians were not aided in any important way by any other third world actors. There was very little buildup to the crisis, and it subsided almost as quickly as it had begun—after the crew was recovered and the Marines were extracted on the fourth day.

SCENARIO

Cambodia is a small and unfortunate land. It is embedded in the heart of turbulent Southeast Asia with Thailand on the northwest, Laos to the north, and Vietnam to the east (fig. 1). It is about as far from its eastern border to the western one as it is from Washington, D.C., to Boston, Massachusetts. From north to south, the distance is about the same as from Hartford, Connecticut, to Washington, D.C. The population of the entire country does not equal that of New York City, and the vast majority of its population is made up of Khmer people, though it does contain an ethnic Chinese minority amounting to but 5 percent of the total. The setting is tropical and the economy, such as it is, is an agrarian one based mainly on rubber and rice.

The Khmer people have been conditioned to strife by centuries, or even millennia, of wars with and among their combative neighbors. The tides of

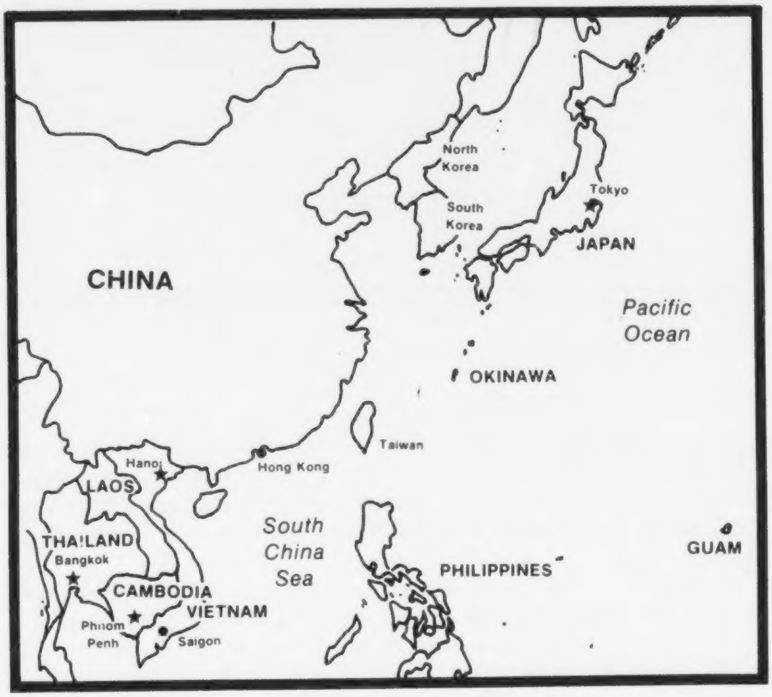
North Korea
South Korea
Tokyo
JAPAN
CHINA
Pacific Ocean
OKINAWA
Taiwan
Hong Kong
Hanoi
LAOS
THAILAND
Bangkok
CAMBODIA
VIETNAM
Phnom Penh
Saigon
South China Sea
PHILIPPINES
GUAM

Figure 1. Southeast Asia.

Bhuddism, Confucianism, nationalism, Western imperialism, racism, and Communism have flowed to and fro across the region and involved the people of all the Southeast Asian countries in continual warfare. For those Cambodians still alive in the eighth decade of the twentieth century, the most important of these conflicts was the Vietnamese civil struggle—and that with France and the United States—which had gone on then for 50 years. Cambodia had been directly and indirectly involved in the Vietnamese wars in many ways. The Communists had just registered their final victory with the fall of Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975, and the collapse of Saigon 13 days later. The feeling in both cities was clearly one of exhilaration, but the mood in the United States was full of frustration, disillusionment, and self-doubt.

A glance at figure 1 will show that practically all of the sea traffic between the major Gulf of Thailand ports of Bangkok, Sattahip, and Kompong Som and those of Hong Kong and Japan must pass close by the southern tip of Vietnam and rather near the coast of Cambodia—or else spend unnecessary amounts of precious fuel swinging further out to sea (fig. 2). It is a heavily traveled route—15 freighters must pass near the Poulo Wai Islands every day.[2] Much of the military cargo for the US forces in Thailand had been passing through Sattahip for 10 years or so prior to

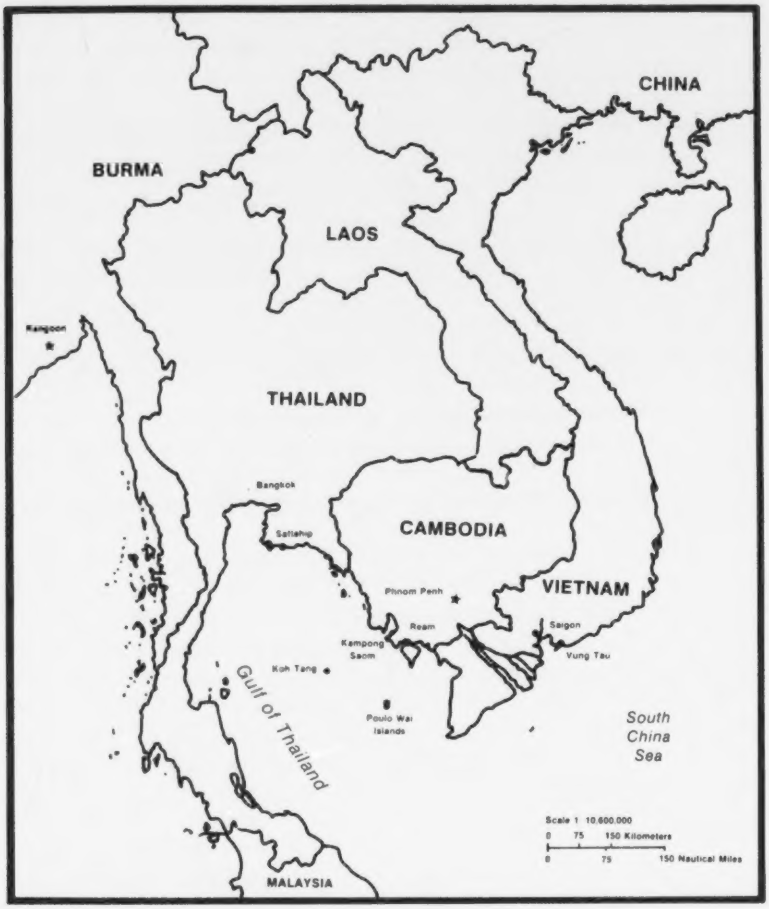
CHINA
BURMA
LAOS
Rangoon
THAILAND
Bangkok
Sattahip
CAMBODIA
Phnom Penh
VIETNAM
Ream
Saigon
Kampong Saom
Vung Tau
Koh Tang
Gulf of Thailand
Poulo Wai Islands
South China Sea
Scale 1 10,600,000
0 75 150 Kilometers
0 75 150 Nautical Miles
MALAYSIA

Figure 2. The Gulf of Thailand.

1975, and Bangkok had much longer served as the commercial transshipment point for most of the imports and exports for the entire country of Thailand.

GENESIS OF CRISIS

On 17 April 1975, the Communist Khmer Rouge completed its conquest of Cambodia by capturing the capital, Phnom Penh. In subsequent weeks, it was busily trying to consolidate its control of the countryside and towns, partly through a deurbanization program that practically depopulated the main city—bloated with wartime refugees—and partly through the designation of a 90-mile zone[3] off their coast as their own. The law of the sea had been under international debate up to this time with various parties arguing for territorial waters extending to 3-mile limits, 12-mile limits, and even 200-mile economic zones. The territorial waters of the new Khmer Rouge regime included the well-traveled main sea route around the southern tip of Vietnam and into Sattahip and Bangkok (fig. 2). A group of US-built, 65-foot gunboats owned by the previous Cambodian government was available to support this purpose. The Lon Nol government crews of the gunboats were retained and the crew's new loyalties were guaranteed by the embarkation of Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

Because a large part of the Southeast Asian diet is made up of seafood, the Gulf of Thailand is literally crawling with small Thai fishing boats. The Khmer Rouge had captured many of these in the days following the fall of Phnom Penh. There were rumors that there was oil to be had among the offshore islands whose ownership had been a source of continual controversy between the Vietnamese, the Cambodians, and the Thais for many years.[4] On 4 May, a South Korean ship passing the coast had been fired upon by the Khmer gunboats, but it escaped. A few days later, on Wednesday the seventh, a Panamanian vessel was not as fortunate, for it was captured and detained for about 36 hours.[5] Needless to say, the Khmer Rouge regime was openly hostile to vessels faring within its self-proclaimed 90-mile economic zone.

The SS *Mayaguez* was a US freighter of World War II vintage which its owner, the Sea-Land Corporation, had converted to a container ship. The conversion was a successful innovation that saved a good deal of operating expense by handling only cargo packed into standardized vans that could be moved to the dockside by regular highway tractors and quickly loaded and unloaded (container and all) through special cranes mounted on the ship itself. This procedure greatly reduced the time the ship was in port and the stevedoring expenses. Further, since the cargo remained locked up in the vans the entire time from its departure from the sender's plant to its arrival in the hands of the receiver, losses through pilferage were also greatly reduced.

By 1975, the Sea-Land Corporation had developed better ships for the trans-Pacific trunk line; and the prototypes, the *Mayaguez* and her sister ship, the SS *Ponce*, were relegated to shorter feeder runs at the western end of the route. At Hong Kong, containers were removed from the ships that had brought them from the United States, then segregated according to destination, and reloaded aboard the *Mayaguez* and the *Ponce* for the last part of the trip. The *Mayaguez* had carried a cargo out of Vung Tau, Vietnam, on 21 April just before the fall of Saigon, but she had since gone to Hong Kong for a new load.[6] All the containers were destined for Sattahip and contained general cargo of base exchange merchandise and other supplies.[7]

So it happened that at midday on Monday, 12 May 1975, the SS *Mayaguez* was approaching the Poulo Wai Islands, located perhaps 100 miles west-northwest of the southern tip of Vietnam.[8] Capt Charles T. Miller, the skipper of the *Mayaguez*, was below deck at the time, but was called to the bridge as a gunboat flying a Cambodian flag approached his ship and fired shots across his bow. He brought the

Figure 3. US Air Force F-111 All-Weather, Fighter Aircraft.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

ship to a halt and uniformed personnel came aboard from the gunboat. The time was 2:18 in the afternoon.[9]

While the *Mayaguez* had been slowing down, and for a remarkable time thereafter, her radio operator had been sending out an SOS on the standard maritime emergency frequencies. The message was picked up by a shipping firm's employee in Jakarta, Indonesia, and after some delay relayed to the US Embassy there. The embassy forwarded the word to Washington where it was received one hour and 56 minutes after the boarding took place (during the early hours, Washington time, on Monday morning). The arrival of the message at the National Military Command Center (NMCC) triggered an immediate exchange between that agency and the headquarters of Pacific Command (PACOM) in Hawaii; however, the news was not given to President Ford until he was informed by Gen Brent Scowcroft at the regular Monday morning briefing at 7:40 a.m. (Washington time).[10]

The time was 6:40 p.m. in Cambodia with less than an hour of daylight remaining. The initial SOS had given a fairly accurate position, but as the crew did not know where they would be taken, they could hardly give the US decision makers an idea where the ship would be when any deployed forces might arrive in the region. The immediate problem was that darkness was nearing in the Gulf of Thailand and the exact position and condition of ship and crew were uncertain. Thus, as with most crises, the first and most urgent need was for more information, and land-based air power quickly provided it.

LAND-BASED AIR POWER IN THE REGION

At the time of the capture of the SS *Mayaguez* on 12 May 1975, the American commander in the region, Lt Gen J. J. Burns, USAF, had three fighter wings and a special operations wing at his disposal. Within these units there were F-111 all-weather fighter bombers (fig. 3), F-4 Phantoms equipped for both air-to-ground and

U.S. AIR FORCE

Figure 4. US Air Force C-130 Hercules Military Transport Aircraft.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

air-to-air combat, RF-4 reconnaissance Phantoms, A-7 Corsair fighter-bombers, AC-130s with special sensors and guns for work at night and under adverse weather conditions, special operations CH-53 helicopters, rescue HH-53 helicopters equipped for air-to-air refueling, OV-10 forward air controller aircraft, airborne battlefield command and control centers (ABCCC) (carried in C-130s), sufficient KC-135 tanker resources nearby to handle the requirements of all the fighter-bombers, and C-130s (fig. 4) that could refuel the HH-53s.

Though they were not under the command of General Burns, the B-52s at Guam had long since proven their ability to strike at targets in Southeast Asia and were soon standing on alert in case the need arose again. The attack carrier USS *Coral Sea* was near the scene of the battle for which it had been named en route to Australia, and it had its full complement of combat aircraft embarked. Like the B-52s at Guam, the aircraft of the carrier were not under Lieutenant General Burns' command. Neither were the land-based, P-3 patrol planes of the US Navy, which belonged to a parent unit at Cubi Point in the Philippines. Some of the P-3 Orions of the Cubi squadron were kept at a forward operating location (FOL) at U Tapao Royal Thai Air Force, a little over 200 miles northwest of the scene of the seizure. General Burns did not have any airlift units assigned, but there were some C-130s in the cargo configuration based in the Philippines within easy range of Cambodia; and there were enough Military Airlift Command (MAC) C-141s deployed in the system in the western Pacific to move a battalion of marines from Okinawa to Thailand and back again in one wave.

Against this array, the Cambodians had some propeller-driven aircraft, mostly American-built C-47s and T-28s. The Khmer antiaircraft system was primitive compared to that of the North Vietnamese, though some 37-millimeter (mm) guns were reported at the Ream airport and the two dozen or so gunboats in the Cambodian navy had guns up to 40 mm aboard.[11]

GATHERING INFORMATION AND SETTING OBJECTIVES

The first task was to discover the location and condition of the *Mayaguez;* the Navy P-3 Orion at U Tapao was launched at 9:57 a.m. (Washington time) in response to JCS orders that had gone out at 7:30 a.m.[12] Six hours and 39 minutes had passed since the initial boarding.[13] Another Orion was off from Cubi Naval Air Station minutes after the first one, but it was more than four hours' flying time away from the Gulf of Thailand. The U Tapao plane quickly located a ship but could not positively identify it as the *Mayaguez* because of darkness. It was clear, though, that it was a vessel of the same class as the *Mayaguez*.[14] The *Mayaguez* at that instant was anchored about a mile off Poulo Wai, a tiny group of islands about 90 statute miles southwest of the port of Kompong Som. It lay there through the night of the 12th (Monday) with the crew aboard and with the Navy patrol airplanes overhead maintaining surveillance. "Shortly after sunrise on the thirteenth" in the words of Commander Messegee, the P-3 then on station made a low pass abeam the port side of the ship, read her name off the hull, and had positive confirmation.[15] The ship soon got underway on a northeast course, apparently bound for Kompong Som. The Navy patrol aircraft continued tracking the vessel while reporting its speed and heading to Washington. Much to the surprise of Commander Messegee, for one, the ship proceeded to the far side of Koh Tang Island, about halfway to the mainland, and anchored there opposite a cove at the northeast extremity.[16]

The air task fell wholly on the shoulders of the Navy patrol planes for the first 24 hours of the crisis. After the ship had been moved to Koh Tang in the middle of the afternoon on Tuesday, the Air Force was able to put some force into the area with F-4s, A-7s, and F-111s from Thailand. There had been some apprehension among the Orion crews that they might be subject to the attentions of hostile interceptors, but that was now relieved.[17] After nightfall, the AC-130s, also from Thailand, were stationed overhead for surveillance and any fire support required.[18] They added a dimension to the capability to gather information with their low-light-level television, infrared sensing, and extensive communications equipment, along with a long loiter time.

From the outset in Washington, the declared objective for the air units was to recover the crew and the ship. Additionally, the decision makers made no secret of the secondary objective of impressing the rest of the world that the United States had the capability and the will to act to defend her interests in the remotest of areas.[19]

FORMULATING OPTIONS

Even before the first *Mayaguez* National Security Council (NSC) meeting, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had taken some steps in preparation for possible options. They ordered some of the naval units closest to the scene to set course for the Gulf of Thailand and directed that air reconnaissance be sent to ascertain the location of the captured ship.[20]

No final decisions were made at the first National Security Council meeting on Monday morning, but several initiatives were set in motion while awaiting further information. In addition to the diplomatic measures decided upon, the *Coral Sea* was directed to proceed to the vicinity of Kompong Som.[21] The carrier was then located in the region of the *Coral Sea* some 950 miles from the objective.[22] Its estimated time of arrival was 3:00 a.m. on Thursday, 15 May (Cambodian time). At the same time, orders went out to assemble an amphibious force in the Philippines and to cover the entire objective area with constant photo reconnaissance.[23] Further instructions directed the movement of US Air Force security police from Nakhon Phanom, the movement of marines from Okinawa to U Tapao, and the assemblage of all helicopter assets in Thailand at U Tapao. Thus, even on Monday, before the information-gathering effort was fairly underway, diplomatic, bombing, boarding, and landing options were already under consideration and efforts were being made to preserve all those alternatives.

From midafternoon (Cambodian time) Tuesday onward, a more or less continuous air presence was maintained in the vicinity of the *Mayaguez* and Koh Tang Island with Navy P-3Cs, US Air Force F-4s, A-7s, and, at night, AC-130s and F-111s. Late in the afternoon, the aircraft on station were ordered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to prevent the movement of the *Mayaguez* into the mainland by firing in the vicinity of the boats in the area, but not directly at them. A couple of hours later, the JCS informed PACOM that the immediate objective was to prevent the movement of the *Mayaguez* to the mainland port. In order to achieve that, the air forces at the scene were authorized to disable the ship with their fire but not to sink it, and to act with a minimum risk of life.[24]

Early in the morning, around seven o'clock on Wednesday, orders arrived from the President that, if necessary, forces were to shoot at gunboats trying to leave Koh Tang Island for the mainland. Several were sunk or disabled during the day. It was also on Wednesday morning, when the *Mayaguez* crew was moving toward the mainland on a fishing vessel, that a US Air Force fighter pilot making a firing pass on the boat recognized Caucasian faces just in the nick of time, and withheld his fire. The President then directed that the aircraft involved attempt to turn the boat around with fire in the water near the craft and finally with riot control agents.

The points to be noted here are that through Wednesday, all the measures assigned to the air forces on the scene were *not* designed to cause a behavior change on the part of the Cambodian decision makers. They *were* designed for two things: first, to gather additional information on which to base the behavior-changing strategy, and, second, to stabilize the situation by preventing the movement of the ship and crew to the mainland—to preserve the status quo, and not to win the release of the captives. Attempts were made on Tuesday and Wednesday to carefully control the violence against the ship and the gunboats, and to minimize the damage to property and lives to the level required for the maintenance of the status quo. The movements of the Marines from Okinawa, the carrier from the south, and the helicopters and security policemen from Thai up-country bases toward the scene of the action suggested that attempts would soon be made to coerce the Cambodian decision makers into a behavior change, but the target leaders had no way of knowing about those movements. They could see only the air activity over the ship and the island and along their own coast.

One of the options had been foreclosed Tuesday evening when a CH-53 helicopter out of Nakhon Phanom loaded with 18 security policemen suffered a mechanical failure and crash that killed all of them along with the chopper's crew.[25] Gone was any chance of putting airmen directly aboard the *Mayaguez* by helicopter, and any such solution would have to await the arrival of the marines by C-141 from Okinawa or the Philippines.

All the warning shots and riot control agents of the US Air Force fighter bombers did not suffice to turn the fishing boat carrying Captain Miller and his men to the mainland. The Thai fishermen operating the boat *did* want to return to Koh Tang, and two of the escorting Cambodian gunboats did indeed flee back to the island. But the Khmer guards held a gun against the Thai skipper's temple and they plodded on to Kompong Som.[26] During the day on Wednesday, about a thousand marines had been brought into U Tapao aboard MAC C-141s. That afternoon, the man who was to command the invasion of Koh Tang if that option were selected, Lt Col R. W. Austin, USMC, went down to Koh Tang aboard an Army twin-engine Beechcraft, a U-21, to scout out the most suitable helicopter landing zones. He circled the island twice at 6,000 feet and determined that the only possible places to alight were two beaches at the northern end, one in the cove on the northeastern side and the other across a narrow neck of land from the first and facing to the west (fig. 5). The marines were informed that there was a possible antiaircraft site located on the shore of the cove, and they requested that it be eliminated prior to the assault.[27] An alternative existed in that there were to be three BLU-82, 15,000-pound bombs aboard C-130s overhead during the assault. These bombs could be used to clear helicopter landing pads in the densest of jungles, but the marines did not opt to use them for fear of injuring *Mayaguez* crew members on the island.[28]

The options already implied in the initial moves on Monday were further discussed in the two National Security Council meetings of Tuesday, 13 May. An additional diplomatic initiative was taken shortly after midday on Wednesday with a message to the secretary general of the United Nations requesting his assistance; and the USS *Hancock*, an amphibious carrier, was directed to set sail from the Philippines.[29] Also on Wednesday, the Joint Chiefs of Staff debated among themselves as to the structure of their final recommendation to the President. There was some sentiment among them for a delay until additional forces could be in place on Friday and the operations could be planned more thoroughly, but they finally agreed that the press of time was too urgent and that the operation should be undertaken at first light on Thursday.[30]

SELECTING THE BEST OPTION

During the National Security Council meeting of late Wednesday afternoon (very early Thursday morning, Cambodian time), President Ford made the final decision on the option to be executed:

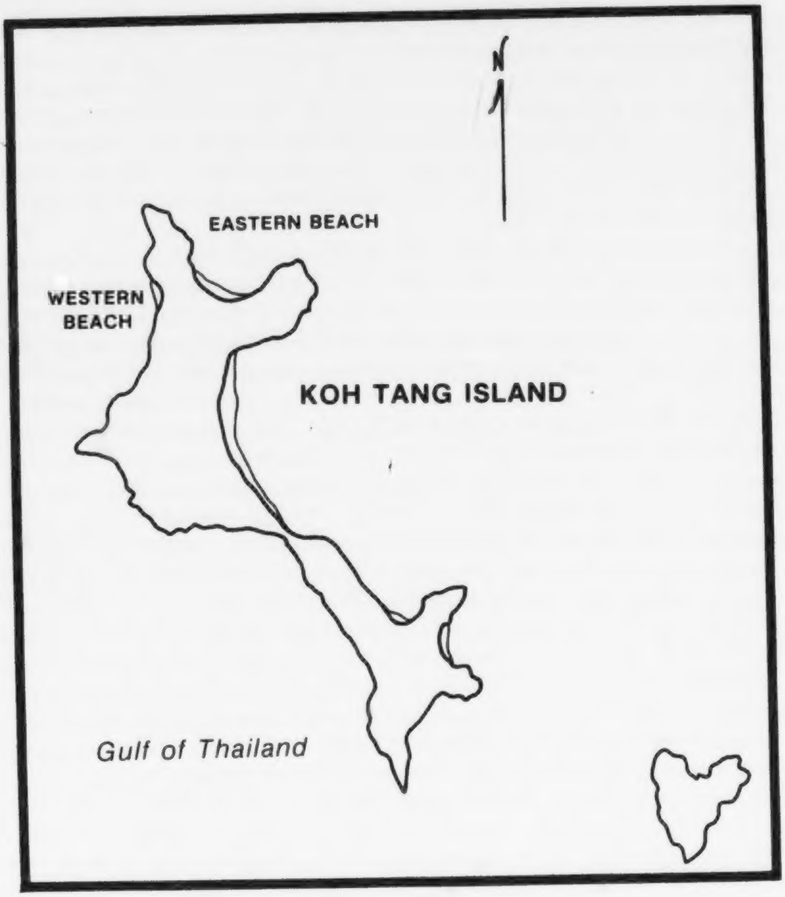

Figure 5. Koh Tang Island.

1. An initial wave of helicopters would land about 175 marines on both the northern beaches of Koh Tang with the mission of securing the island for 72 hours, searching it for the American captives, and assuring their safety. Eight of the 11 helicopters available were assigned to that part of the task.

2. A smaller group of marines would be put aboard the USS *Holt* via the remaining three helicopters. The choppers would then return from both *Holt* and the island to U Tapao for a second wave of marines (a four-hour round trip.) The *Holt* would proceed alongside the *Mayaguez* for an old-fashioned boarding after the latter had been prepared with riot-control agents by US Air Force A-7s. Once the ship was secured, the *Holt* would tow her out to sea while some sailors from the Military Sealift Command made preparations to get her underway under her own power.

3. The USS *Coral Sea* was to launch four air strikes, the first of which was to be coordinated with the boarding of the marines on the SS *Mayaguez*.[31] The declared purpose of these bombings was to protect the marine operation at Koh Tang from possible intervention by Cambodian military forces from around the Ream airport and Kompong Som.[32]

4. The US Air Force aircraft from Thailand were not to be used against mainland Cambodia, but were rather assigned the task of providing close air support to the marines on Koh Tang *after* the landings had been started—there was to be no prelanding bombardment.

5. The B-52 units at Guam were to remain on one-hour alert.

The choice of options was not very broad. Doing nothing is always one, but there was not much chance that would happen in the *Mayaguez* case, not only because the United States was still smarting over her humiliation with the fall of Saigon but also because of the painful memory of the USS *Pueblo* incident. Further, President Ford's domestic political standing was none too strong at the moment, and he needed to behave "presidentially" in order to strengthen it.[33] Further diplomatic efforts might have been undertaken, or more time might have been allowed to those initiatives that were tried; but even as it noted those possibilities, the General Accounting Office's subsequent investigation agreed that none of them was really promising.[34] Taking another Cambodian island might have been easier to achieve than capturing Koh Tang, but that was deemed too indirect. The use of the B-52s to hit the target around Kompong Som was seriously considered, especially while it was thought that the *Coral Sea* might not arrive in time, but that idea was rejected as "overkill." Apparently, President Ford believed that the attacks from carrier aircraft would be more "surgical" and less destabilizing than would those from the Strategic Air Command (SAC) bombers.[35] The idea of making helicopter landings directly on the *Mayaguez* was briefly considered, but rejected, partly because enough choppers for such an assault could not be spared from the main landings on Koh Tang.[36]

Thus, one suspects, the final solution was fashioned by a process of elimination. The result was a helicopter assault on the *Mayaguez* via the USS *Holt* and another on Koh Tang Island, both supported directly by US Air Force fighter-bombers and AC-130 gunships overhead and less directly by US Navy carrier aircraft strikes in the vicinity of Ream airport and the harbor at Kompong Som. One might say that the B-52s on alert at Guam and the amphibious forces inbound from the Philippines constituted a kind of a reserve to be used as a last extremity. The immediate goal was the recapture of the ship and her crew, and the location of the latter was not precisely known. A less direct goal, and one declared to be secondary, was the aim of impressing the rest of the world with the US capability and will to defend her interests on the high seas and elsewhere. It seems quite clear that those measures that had been designed only to stabilize the situation around Koh Tang may have stimulated the desired behavior change on the part of the adversary; those intended to cause the behavior change cannot have had anything to do with it.[37]

Figure 6. US Air Force HH-53 Air Refuelable Rescue Helicopter.
(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

IMPLEMENTATION

The two US Marine Corps contingents destined for Koh Tang and the *Mayaguez* embarked in US Air Force CH-53 and HH-53 helicopters (fig. 6) at U Tapao at 4:15 a.m. (Cambodian time), just as the final National Security Council meeting was coming to an end in Washington. As the helicopters flew through the darkness toward the objective, the President was briefing the congressional leadership on what had been done and what he was going to do. At 6:09 a.m. (Cambodian time) the first helicopter of the first wave of marines arrived at the northeastern beach of Koh Tang. Two minutes earlier, the Cambodians had broadcast their intention to release the *Mayaguez* (without mentioning the intention to release the crew as well). About 11 minutes later the word arrived at Koh Rong Som Lem from Phnom Penh that Captain Miller and his sailors were to be released—before the authorities in the capital could possibly have known that the marines had landed, or were landing, on the island—and several hours before the first bomb dropped on the mainland.[38]

Landings at Koh Tang

The first insertions at Koh Tang were attempted by eight helicopters carrying about 175 marines. Two other helicopters that had off-loaded on the USS *Holt* returned directly to the staging base, but a third one was delayed in making a rescue attempt at the island before returning to the staging base. All together 11 helicopters were involved in the first insertion. Nine actually landed at Koh Tang. As previous passages have shown, the estimates of the enemy order of battle varied widely, from the 10 to 20 given to the marines at U Tapao to the 150 to 200 given to decisions makers in Washington—with the latter being the more accurate figure.

The initial approach was into the cove in an attempt to land on the northeastern beach. The first wave of helicopters was to have placed six loads of infantrymen on the eastern beach and two loads on the smaller western beach (fig. 5). However, two helicopters were immediately lost in the cove and a third staggered a mile or so out to sea before it went down. A fourth suffered fuel system damage that required it to make a forced landing on the Thai coast short of U Tapao. Four, then, came back from Koh Tang. Because of the losses and the ferocity of the resistance at the former landing zone, the bulk of the troops were put down on the western shore of the island. Fifteen of the 18 persons lost on the island were killed during this initial insertion.

The first wave did manage to put a few more than a hundred marines ashore, but they were separated into three groups, with the command group being somewhat south of the western beach and separated from the bulk of the force for some time while it worked its way northward. The forces placed on the two beaches were supposed to have fought across the neck of land between them to link up, but they were never able to do so.

No preparatory fires had been permitted prior to the landings for fear of hitting the American mariners thought to be on the island. Once the forces were on the beach, they were to have used their radios to direct the attacks of the aircraft above at safe targets. However, all the radios supplied for that purpose were aboard one of the helicopters lost in the water at the outset, and the only way of communicating with the supporting planes was through a survival radio on emergency frequencies.[39] As soon as the forces were ashore, close air support (CAS) was permitted, but the communication problem was still intense because of the uncertain locations of the three groups of friendly forces and the jungle cover, which shielded the enemies. For a time, the AC-130 crew on scene was providing forward air controller (FAC) services, but late in the day an OV-10 (fig. 7) from the forces based in Thailand came to carry out that part of the mission. Apparently the air cover had some effect since no more helicopters were lost after the initial landings—though plenty of battle damage was done.[40]

Of the nine helicopters that actually landed at Koh Tang, eight came back with battle damage, or were lost entirely.[41] Only one of those nine was capable of a second mission. It was joined by the two returning from the *Holt* and two more that had come out of maintenance while the first wave was fighting its way into Koh Tang. Thus, there were only five helicopters available for the second wave that was supposed to reinforce the 131 marines and 5 airmen on the island.[42]

As we have seen, the Cambodians broadcast their intention to release the ship, if not the crew, at nearly the same time that the first insertion was made. About an hour later, before the first wave had completed its work, the message had been transmitted, translated, and put into President Ford's hands. By that time, the crew of the *Mayaguez* had been freed and was chugging out to the scene of battle in the slow Thai fishing boat that had carried them to the mainland the day before. That fact became known at Washington and U Tapao after some delay, but before the arrival of the second wave at Koh Tang. It was not known, however, to Colonel

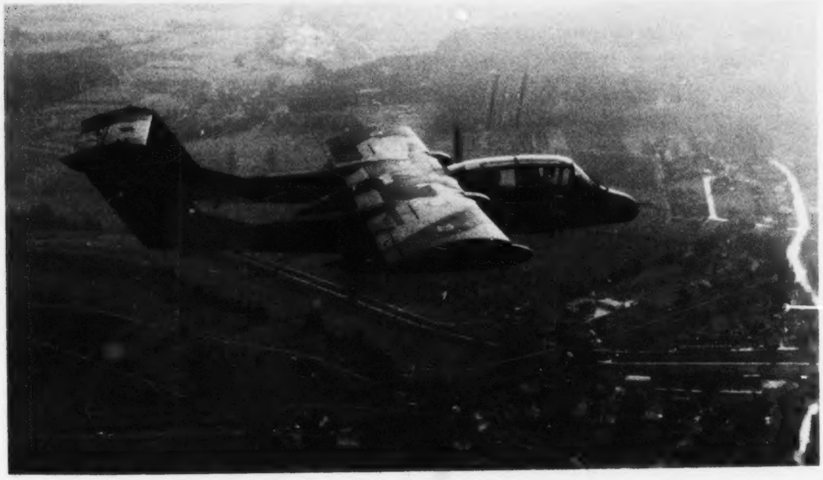

Figure 7. OV-10 Broncos provided the forward air controller mission during the first insertions at Koh Tang.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

Austin commanding the troops on the island. The second wave got orders from above to abort the insertion and to return to base, but when Colonel Austin heard that, he insisted that the helicopter wave be turned around again and landed as planned. At the time the helicopters were brought in, Colonel Austin was still intending to search the island for the *Mayaguez* crew (around midday). The reinforcements told him about the recovery of Captain Miller and his sailors, and the problem immediately was transformed to the safe extraction of the more than 200 Americans on Koh Tang.[43]

One more helicopter was put out of action during the landing of the second wave of the marines, leaving four to carry out the withdrawal. Attempts to do so were undertaken in the middle of the afternoon, but the opposition was so fierce that the work could not be completed until after dark. The arrival of the *Coral Sea* for use as an off-loading point and for refueling greatly facilitated the work by eliminating the four-hour round trip to U Tapao. Close air support for the extraction was provided by the US Air Force units that had been present all along, aided now by Navy attack aircraft from the *Coral Sea*. By the time of the extractions, the forward air controller function had been assumed by some OV-10s that arrived on the scene in late afternoon. In the early part of the day, the work had been done by A-7s, but that was hampered much by the short loiter time and the need to frequently go back to the tankers for refueling. Later, an AC-130 did the work for a time, but its primary mission was fire support; besides, the gunship resources had to be husbanded during the day in case the marines were forced to stay on the inhospitable island through the night. Finally, when the OV-10s came on the scene both the loiter time and the training in the FAC work were available. The combination was finally successful in pulling out the marines without further fatalities and without any more helicopter losses though it was well after dark before everyone was safe aboard the *Coral Sea*.[44]

During the course of the Koh Tang operation, 15 marines and airmen lost their lives, and three more were missing-in-action. Three of the 13 helicopters that had been engaged were lost—all of them in the opening minutes of the battle. Practically all of the remainder received battle damage.[45] Only two of the fixed-wing aircraft involved were hit, and their damage was superficial. None of the Navy ships or small boats involved were damaged. The Cambodian personnel casualties were indeterminate. According to President Ford's post-mission report to the Congress, three Khmer gunboats had been sunk and four others damaged in the effort to isolate the island.[46] Because the Cambodian navy had consisted of but about two dozen gunboats in the first place, a third of its strength was lost in the battle when a few days after the damaged gunboats had been beached and the others sank, the crew of one of the boats involved in the seizure of the *Mayaguez* mutinied and took their vessel into a Thai port.[47]

Retaking the *Mayaguez*

The original plan for the recapture of the SS *Mayaguez* had been that an assault take place on the ship at the same time the landings were to be made on the beaches of Koh Tang. As the plan evolved, though, decision makers felt that a heliborne attack would be too dangerous and require so many more helicopters that there would not be enough left for the attack on shore. Thus, three loads of marines would be placed aboard the USS *Holt*, which would lay itself alongside the *Mayaguez* for a ship-to-ship assault. The way was to be prepared by an Air Force drop of riot control agents aboard the merchantman immediately prior to the closure by the Navy destroyer. Once the marines had boarded the ship and secured it, then the USS *Holt* would take it in tow and bring it further out to sea and safety. Six civil service employees of the Military Sealift Command volunteered to go aboard to fire up the boilers and take the vessels to safety after the tow was completed.[48]

The implementation of the boarding part of the plan went well enough—better than expected, in fact. The riot control agent was in place as planned and the *Holt* was smartly placed alongside the target. The marines went over without incident and found that the ship was not occupied. The towing rig was fashioned, and the *Mayaguez* was taken in tow. Soon thereafter, the ship's own crew was recovered and brought to her and they got up steam and proceeded to Singapore accompanied by Navy P-3 escorts.[49]

Some sources have suggested that the Cambodian captors had been so frightened at the approach of the *Holt* that they had been scared away; many of the press reports of the time said the captors had left hot food aboard the ship. Captain Wood, who was there, however, denied that there was such food, and there were no reports of fleeing boats or swimmers. Moreover, the ferocity of the resistance on the island and the fact that the decision to release the crew and ship had come down from Phnom Penh between the time that the marines landed on the island and the time that the *Mayaguez* was boarded suggest that possibly the ship's guards had left because of a decision from the capital and not because of the approach of the destroyer.

Bombing the Mainland

The feature of the *Mayaguez* operation that has caused as much controversy as all the rest combined was the bombing of the mainland by aircraft from the USS *Coral Sea*. According to President Ford's memoirs, four cycles of attacks were to have been made from the carrier and the first was to have been coordinated with the recapture of the ship. The declared objective was to prevent any reinforcement of the Khmer forces on Koh Tang so as to protect the Marine landings taking place there. A secondary objective of the bombings and all the other military operations was to demonstrate US capability and will to the rest of the doubting world.[50]

The targets (fig. 2) were "military installations near Kompong Som, including an oil depot, railroad marshaling yards and the airfield at Ream. . . . Some 2,400 Cambodian troops were stationed in the area, and there were at least a dozen military planes at Ream airfield."[51]

The first cycle of attackers was launched from the *Coral Sea* at 7:05 a.m. (Cambodian time) on Thursday and it arrived in its target area at about 7:45 a.m., which was the same time the marines were boarding the *Mayaguez*, but about an hour-and-a-half after the first of them had landed on Koh Tang, and an hour-and-twenty-five minutes after the word had come from Phnom Penh to release the *Mayaguez* crew.[52] The Cambodians issued a broadcast promising the release of the ship (only) at about the same time the Koh Tang landings took place. Because that news arrived at the White House just before the first cycle was about to strike, President Ford temporarily delayed the attack. A few minutes later, he authorized it; but it was too late then because the aircraft were running too low on fuel and had to jettison their bombs and go back to the carrier.[53]

The second cycle was launched in its turn and arrived at the target at 9:57 a.m. (Cambodian time) and proceeded to attack the Ream airport. At that moment, a Navy P-3 had already spotted a fishing vessel with Caucasians aboard waving white flags—a fact that was relayed to the President almost instantaneously. The report said that there were 30 Caucasians there (the crew consisted of 40 people and, actually, all were aboard subject boat). The attackers were limited to bomb release altitudes of 6,000 feet, and when they returned, they reported that they had destroyed 17 aircraft. Later photo interpretation revealed, however, that there had been only 12 airplanes on the field and that 3 had been destroyed and 2 others damaged. Six were unscratched and the twelfth was a wreck in the first place.[54] Thus, the first bomb to hit the mainland did so at 9:57 a.m., three hours and forty-eight minutes after the landings at Koh Tang began.

The third cycle hit its targets at the Ream naval base and the Kompong Som harbor about an hour after the second one had dropped its bombs. Fuel storage areas, barracks, a railroad marshaling yard, and an oil refinery were among the targets hit. A total of 15 airplanes from the three cycles had actually expended weapons, and the last of them hit the ground about 10:50 in the morning (Cambodian time). The fourth cycle was never launched.[55]

The bombing attacks, then, were not very well coordinated with either the attack on Koh Tang or the boarding of the *Mayaguez*—perhaps for understandable reasons. It is clear, also, that they could not have had any impact on the behavior of the Cambodians with respect to the crew of the *Mayaguez*, for the Khmers could not have known the attacks were coming. As for the secondary objective, that of impressing the rest of the world with US determination, the polemics on the point flew fast and furious through the media afterwards, but nothing can be proven.

LAND-BASED AIR POWER AND CRISIS RESOLUTION

Despite the poorly coordinated attacks and the Cambodians' apparent ignorance of them, the *Mayaguez* crisis provides an opportunity to examine the utility and limitations of land-based air power in a relatively simple interaction occurring between a superpower and an LDC. From the beginning to the end of the crisis, the unique characteristics and capabilities of land-based air power provided US decision makers with an option that included responsiveness, assured command and control, tailored forces, and flexible employment capabilities. During the crisis, it was reasonably evident that the quick use of land-based air power stabilized the interaction quite early and then brought about the desired behavior modification that led to termination.

The *Mayaguez* had been seized in the early afternoon, and not long after dark the Navy crew flying out of Thailand had a fix on the ship's location. This significant event took place on the opposite side of the globe from Washington, and, of course, no other means of information acquisition could have reacted that quickly. For better or worse, the decision makers had indications that the ship had not been moved to the mainland, as the *Pueblo* had been, and they could begin their planning accordingly.

The aerial firepower on the scene early on Tuesday afternoon could have been there sooner had it been ordered to so move. About 24 hours after the seizure, air assets were available overhead that could maintain constant surveillance and that could absolutely prohibit further movement of the ship were US decision makers willing to take the risk of incidental injury to her crew members, whose location was then unknown. Though there were some things that ships could do in that context that airplanes could not, the first aircraft got there two days before the first naval unit. Had the ship not been covered by some sort of force during those two days, it is quite conceivable that it could have been moved the 30 miles into the mainland port of Kompong Som, seriously compounding the problem of recovery. Once the AC-130s, and especially the airborne battlefield command and control center C-130s, had arrived on the scene on late Tuesday (and both could have gotten units there earlier had they been directed to do so), then the capability for quick response was further enhanced by the instantaneous communications possible with the decision makers in Washington. Their arrival also gave the leaders immediate updates on the situation around Koh Tang and a decided advantage in that regard over their opponents in Phnom Penh.

In addition to its responsiveness, the range of land-based air power clearly demonstrated its utility early in the crisis. With no advance warning at all the US marines on Okinawa—2,000 miles away from the scene—were able to organize and equip themselves, move to Kadena Air Base, meet MAC C-141s gathered up from the pipeline in the western Pacific, move to Thailand, and debark in a combat-ready status at U Tapao in less than 48 hours. Other Marine units were started from the Philippines aboard amphibious surface units. The units inserted to Koh Tang Island were drawn from the 1,000 marines that had been delivered to U Tapao; they fought the battle all day Thursday, were extracted and reembarked in C-141s, and were on their way back to Okinawa before their fellow marines had arrived from the Philippines.

Though operations depended upon the availability of the C-141s near Okinawa and the use of a good aerial port near the scene, this crisis certainly seems to show that air power can add an element of speed to the use of small units of troops that could be decisive at the early stages. Of course, in this case, had the troops on the amphibious vessels inbound from the Philippines been assigned the task of assaulting the island, then the assault could not have occurred before Friday or Saturday and, by then, the prisoners would have been in our hands, the battle would not have been necessary, and lives would have been saved. The assumption here is that the use of land-based air power did not modify Khmer behavior; but no evidence, circumstantial or otherwise, is available to support that assumption.

Personnel delivery at the wholesale level by C-141 worked with impressive dispatch; however, at the retail end of things, the speed of troop movement from U Tapao to Koh Tang was indeed a limiting factor (fig. 2). The round-trip flight times for the CH-53 and HH-53 helicopters, when combined with the limited number available and the load limitations imposed by the weight of their armor and guns, inhibited the rate of troop buildup on the island in an undesirable way. The first wave was inserted around six o'clock in the morning, and the second was not on the scene until a half hour or so before noon. It is not difficult to imagine the tremendous advantages that would have been derived had the *Coral Sea* or preferably the USS *Hancock* (with additional helicopters) been in a forward deployed position, had either arrived soon enough that a carrier would have been available for a staging base, or had the time constraints been perceived as sufficient to permit a day's delay in the launching of the landings. The *Coral Sea* did arrive at midday on Thursday and it acted as such a great multiplier that the four helicopters still available were able to do work that would simply have been out of the question without the use of such a staging base. For that reason, the speed of the *Coral Sea*'s movement to the battle area, along with the speed of the helicopters, limited troop buildup, at least potentially (there was no intention to use the *Coral Sea* to stage the troops inbound to the island even had the ship been able to get to the area on time).

We have seen that the US Air Force attack units were early on the scene and that they probably had some success in stabilizing the situation insofar as the ship was concerned, but they were unable to prevent the movement of the crew to the mainland despite extensive efforts. US Air Force attack units proved that they could stop small vessels where the fear of hitting embarked Americans was not a factor, but the use of riot control agents and expenditure of other ordnance across the bow of one vessel did not stop the determined Khmers.

Responsiveness and range of land-based air power entered the calculus in yet another way. The *Coral Sea* was steaming northward while the decision makers in Washington were developing the crisis response. It was uncertain whether she would arrive in time to support the landings and boarding with air strikes on the mainland. The US Air Force units in Thailand clearly had the physical capability to deliver whatever air strikes they thought desirable, but diplomatic relationships with the Thais prevented their doing so. The only other alternative was the use of B-52s on alert at Guam about 3,000 miles from the locus of the trouble (fig. 1). They were about six hours' flying time away and could have been used in the absence of the *Coral Sea*, but the political inhibitions against such massive responses were strong. Apparently, President Ford and Secretary Kissinger thought that B-52s were insufficiently "surgical" for the work and that they would send signals for more "overkill" than was desirable.[56] The point is, though, that the B-52 option was being considered merely because it *was* a faster response than was possible for the *Coral Sea* in that particular context.

In addition to responsiveness and range, the command, control, and communications (C^3) advantages offered by land-based air power were quite evident throughout the crisis. Most aircraft can carry a heavier and more sophisticated communications suit than can ground units. Though ships can carry even more elaborate sets, their antennae are usually much closer to the surface than are those of aircraft. Thus, both kinds of surface units have communications handicaps compared to airplanes—which can usually quickly change their height for the sake of improving transmission. Thus, the ABCCC C-130 on the scene of the *Mayaguez* incident had the capability of instantaneous voice communications with the National Command Authority (NCA) in Washington, and other aircraft there probably could have established such contact as well had the need arisen. The American decision makers, then, not only had more information than did the Cambodian, but they could have had it sooner. Moreover, they could direct the acquisition of an element of information by instant communications and have their answer in a matter of minutes—in time to include it in their planning. Aircraft over Koh Tang receiving antiaircraft fire could in the midst of the action be directed by the NCA to hold their return fire or to counter it. In fact, a fighter on a pass against a fishing boat was instantly instructed by the President to hold his fire and then to put warning shots across the bow.

Use of land-based air power in the *Mayaguez* crisis also suggests that less force structure vulnerability may be associated with its use as compared to other force employment options. The bases for the land-based air power were hundreds of miles away at U Tapao, at other Thai airfields, and even in the Continental United States (CONUS) in the case of the C-141s. Now it is quite true that the presence of the USS *Hancock* offshore could have had a multiplier effect on even those few helicopters that were on the scene (without her own complement). However, if she, as with the the *Coral Sea*, the USS *Wilson*, and the *Holt*, were standing only a few miles offshore to achieve that multiplier effect, in many other third world contexts, she would be exposing the maintenance shops for the choppers and the mess hall for the crew members to loss. Consider the situation had there been surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) on Koh Tang, as there might be in many places in the Middle East. In the case of Koh Tang, the mess halls and maintenance shops for the A-7s were perhaps four hundred miles away. If the A-7s could achieve the behavior change desired as well as could the infantry helicopter/*Hancock* combination (and in the *Mayaguez* case there can be no question of that), then we might find here some support for the notion that, in some settings, the use of air power rather than ground and sea power (or some combination of the two) can be so much less vulnerable to counteraction as to make actions feasible when they would not otherwise be so. A similar argument might be made in favor of the B-52s, were it possible to say that they could have caused the desired behavior modification operating out of Guam. There the logistical infrastructure was thousands, instead of hundreds, of miles removed from the scene, and only the combat part of the system would have been exposed to loss had it been used.

The final element for consideration is the extent to which the use of land-based airpower modified the behavior of the Khmers. The sequence of events does give us some ideas about what did NOT motivate the adversary leaders to change their behavior. They signaled the release of the ship at 6:07 a.m. (Cambodian time), on Thursday, 15 May. From the testimony of the *Mayaguez* crew, its release started at 6:20 a.m., which means the decision had to have been made some time before that—probably the Khmers intended their broadcast to mean ship *and* crew, though it did not explicitly include a commitment on the latter. As the helicopter assault did not even begin until 6:09 a.m., and the first bomb did not drop on the mainland for several hours after that, we have strong indications that neither of these occurrences had anything to do with Khmer behavior. The motivator was not the bombing. The motivator was not the landings. Because the airlift played a supporting role only for the landings, it cannot have been a decisive factor. As the carrier played a supporting role only for the mainland bombings (a few carrier sorties were flown against Koh Tang, but only after the crew had been released), it cannot have had a decisive role. It is hard to imagine that the Khmer decision makers knew anything of the B-52s in far-off Guam; further, their alert does not seem likely to have been a signal that made it all the way to the receivers—probably it was not even intended to be a signal to them.

The Navy patrol airplanes were on the scene beginning on Monday evening, and the US Air Force firepower and reconnaissance aircraft were on the scene on Tuesday. They did their first shooting on Tuesday and sank more gunboats on the following day. That evening, Captain Miller, of the *Mayaguez,* was told that the Cambodians intended to release him and the ship provided that he arranged to have the air power called off. Thus, in terms of time sequence, it is possible that land-based naval air reconnaissance planes with their constant presence and dropping of flares had an effect on adversary thought. It is also possible that the rather massive air presence of US Air Force fighter bombers, AC-130 gunships, and reconnaissance aircraft over the Gulf and along the Cambodian coast had a desirable effect, since they were used some time *before* the release decision. Perhaps even more important was the fact that those air units actually opened fire, sinking gunboats and killing people (presumably). Much more massive deployments of air and naval power in the case of the *Pueblo* and the subsequent (1969) C-121 shootdown crisis with Korea had had no effect. The cases were dissimilar to the *Mayaguez* incident in many other ways, of course; but whereas the United States did not open fire on any Korean units, she did in the Cambodian case—signaling determination enough to kill deliberately with all the attendant risks and costs associated with that kind of decision. In other words, the presence of the land-based air units signaled the US capability to inflict pain on the Cambodians, and the sinking of the gunboats (though a very limited application of firepower) signaled the will to inflict pain—a very serious kind of pain. Again, we have no hard evidence that this was the way that it worked, but it does seem quite probable.

Another point on the value of land-based air power to modify behavior must be attended to here. The messages received by the Khmers seemed to be different from those sent by the US decision makers. The Americans were trying to indicate that the United States did not want the crew nor the ship moved to the mainland. The preliminary US moves were not expected to achieve the release of the Americans and their vessel, only to prevent the situation from getting worse. Doubtless the Cambodians understood that, for the shooting in front of and around the fishing boat was clearly a signal to stop—the Thai crew members told them so, even had they been so obtuse as to miss the meaning. Yet, they appear to have read even more into the signals than was intended. They appear to have seen a threat to other values so serious that they decided Wednesday evening or very early Thursday morning to release the ship and crew entirely. Of course, this was a very nice outcome for the United States, and it would have been nicer still had it occurred early enough to have prevented the landings and the bombings.

It is quite possible that the Cambodian leadership had no intention of detaining the *Mayaguez* and her sailors, but that the capture was an unauthorized act of some underling. In the turbulence of a new regime in power less than a month, that does not seem farfetched. The Khmers later claimed that that was exactly what happened. Yet, because too many other ships had been seized and because a contest was going on with Vietnam (and Thailand) for possession of the offshore islands, there is reason to doubt the Khmer assertion. Consequently, it seems the Khmer decision to release ship and crew did not arise as they have insisted.

Captain Miller's testimony before Congress suggests that the air presence over the Gulf and the sinking of the gunboats were important to the Khmer decision makers. The air presence proved the capability to impose pain, and the sinkings proved the willingness to do so. The sender's signal was demanding—for the time being—only stabilization or behavior continuance. It seems that the receiver read the message as a demand for modification, and it was credible enough to cause that modification without the actual application of force beyond the sinking of a few gunboats. Thus it seems likely that the Cambodian decision makers read a threat into the presence of the Navy Orions and the US Air Force A-7s, F-4s, F-111s, and AC-130s and acted to avoid the damage to whatever values they perceived as threatened.

Seeing Thailand as an enemy and in league with the United States, perhaps the Cambodians could not have appreciated that it would be difficult to use those Thai-based assets against mainland targets and thus their threat against that sort of value might have been perceived as greater than it really was. It is possible, also, that the Khmer regime feared the loss of additional gunboats—vessels that might have been deemed vital to the contest for the offshore islands thought to contain oil, a commodity that would have added immensely to Cambodia's stricken economy. The conclusion we must draw is that land-based air power can be used not only in all its traditional roles, either for the "definitive" or the "purposeful" use of force, but also as a signaling device to achieve effects with minimum violence—but we must also recognize that such a device is a blunt instrument and that the signal received is quite likely to be different from that sent. Fortunately, in this case the misperception of the signal worked to our advantage, but it may not always be so.

Although the crisis tends to demonstrate the utility of land-based air power, evidence also exists to suggest some limitations. Consider the movement of the marines from Okinawa to U Tapao. They got the word to move late on Tuesday, and by early morning Wednesday, the leading elements of a force of more than a thousand were arriving in Thailand. The diplomatic niceties between Thailand and the United States received rough enough treatment during the emergency that it became politic to get the combat troops out of Thailand as soon as possible (the 141s had them all out before Friday was over). It was a great demonstration of flexibility, and it was a lucky thing that sufficient numbers of the versatile Starlifters were available, for less capable aircraft might not have been able to do it, what with the new political restrictions in the area.

Formerly, the airplanes might have gone straight into Thailand by making a landfall somewhere around, say, Da Nang, crossing Laos in the neighborhood of Savannakhet, and thence down to U Tapao—at a goodly saving in time and distance. Because South Vietnam had fallen and the North Vietnamese had both international law and a formidable air defense to prohibit the use of the old route, it was necessary for the C-141s to fly far to the south rounding the tip of Southeast Asia and then beating back toward the north into U Tapao.

Though the evolution of the law of the sea had not yet progressed to the point where the world had accepted the 12-mile territorial waters limit, the rules of engagement given to the air forces on the scene for the first three days recognized the limit as a constraint. Thus, the US Air Force surveillance forces were prohibited from going closer than 12 miles to Kompong Som. This had a deadly effect in terms of flexibility, for the aircraft that were tracking the fishing boat with the "Caucasians" on the morning of the 14th had to disengage at that point; and, because of the haze, they lost track of the location of what was thought to be the crew or part of it. This event added to the uncertainty under which the decision makers had to operate.

Similarly, political considerations were reducing the flexibility of the US Air Force units then stationed in Thailand. The units were hardly an hour or two away from the target area, and as there were then three fighter wings located in the country, they could have brought far more combat power to bear on the mainland targets than was possible for the air wing aboard the *Coral Sea*—and they could have done it much sooner, had that been necessary. Yet Thai sovereignty was involved and the Thais were busily changing their relationship with the United

States to make it easier to live in a world where the US military presence was no longer a factor, or as much a factor as it had been all through the Vietnam War. Thus Thai security, in part, was more dependent than it had been on good relations, or at least tolerable relations, with their neighbors to the east. Consequently, the Thais made it clear that they could not condone the use of their territory for the mounting of attacks against Cambodia, especially the mainland. The result was that the physical flexibility of the Air Force units in Thailand was not fully available for exploitation and the carrier air units had to be used against the targets at Kompong Som and Ream.[57]

Nevertheless, once it was determined that the US objectives had been achieved, neither the air nor the naval units had to engage in any further violence; they both could withdraw. The Khmer decision makers had no way of preventing that action. The Marine units, though, wished to do no further harm to the Khmer soldiers on Koh Tang. There, however, the Cambodian decision makers did have a voice in the decision to disengage. They were not inclined to let the marines go in peace even though it had to be obvious to them, no matter how untrained they were, that the marines were trying to leave. Thus, this crisis provides some evidence of the way in which land-based air power can achieve goals with less violence than other types of force because of the greater facility with which they can engage and disengage when in contact with a third world adversary.

In the end, the stabilization operation undertaken by the Navy patrol units and the Air Force fighter bombers and gunships on 12, 13, and 14 May, achieved part of its objective since the *Mayaguez* was not moved; however, the crew was relocated to the mainland, a move which greatly worsened the tactical problem facing the rescue forces. Judging from Captain Miller's testimony, the Cambodians would have liked to have moved the ship there too; but without the cooperation of the American mariners, that move may have been beyond the Khmer capability in the short time available. It appears also that sinking the gunboats reinforced the seriousness of US intentions. That action certainly reduced the level of uncertainty in the crisis by making clear the extent to which the United States would go to achieve its objectives.

The landings on Koh Tang, though their motivation and reasonableness were not questioned by the General Accounting Office investigators, did not achieve their objective, and could not have achieved their objective, because the prisoners were not on the island. From the technical point of view, the losses were probably greater than they needed to be because intelligence informing the marines was erroneous, and their request for the elimination of a "possible" antiaircraft site in the northeastern beach was somehow not accommodated. It is true that the *Coral Sea* was not on the scene for the insertion of the first wave, but it might have been had Friday been chosen for the assault. It is also true that its presence for the extraction was vitally important, but it is hard to see how it could have made much difference for the first wave of landings or even for the second wave—except as a recovery point for wounded choppers.

As for the bombings, their declared primary objective was to prevent interference with the Koh Tang landings from the mainland, and no such interference was suffered. In that aspect of the mission, the desire was to prevent a change in adversary behavior—to prevent the Khmer from changing the dormant state of their military forces on the mainland to the active one of reinforcing their troops on the island. As chapter 2 asserted, behavior continuance seems easier to achieve but harder to prove than does behavior modification. Here there was no change, but there is a strong possibility that the Cambodians had no intention of reinforcing the island, for no preparations were observed. Thus, it could be that the bombings achieved the primary objective, but it is equally possible that the outcome would have been the same without the military action. As for the secondary objective, that of improving US credibility around the world, there is no way to measure the achievement of that outcome.

One of the chief complaints of the post-incident antiadministration literature was that the bombings were supposedly "irrational."[58] Of course, no one could advocate irrational responses, but the appearance of irrationality does induce an element of uncertainty into the calculus of adversaries and potential adversaries. That is not to suggest that President Ford and Secretary Kissinger were deliberately doing irrational things, but only that if an adversary can absolutely count on the United States conducting her policy wholly on a cost-effectiveness basis, then the adversary will have an advantage in a crisis. The advantages of the North Vietnamese over the United States in the war ending in 1973 is a case in point—no cost was too great for Hanoi, but America was counting her expenditures very closely. Notwithstanding all that speculation, though, America's objectives in the *Mayaguez* crisis were achieved; but not being privy to the decision-making process in Phnom Penh, we cannot be absolutely sure what the exact determinants were. In other words, hard evidence for cause and effect remains unavailable. Nevertheless, the eventual outcome, when viewed in the context of all known evidence—including the testimony of Captain Miller—clearly suggests that land-based air power first stabilized the crisis and then modified behavior in such a way as to terminate the crisis on terms satisfactory to the United States.

NOTES

CHAPTER 3

1. Comptroller General, "The Seizure of the *Mayaguez*—A Case Study of Crisis Management," a report to the Subcommittee on International Political and Military Affairs, House Committee on International Relations, 94th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), 58. (Hereinafter referred to as GAO Report.) The People's Republic of China (PRC) representative in Washington refused to accept a message from the United States for Cambodia, and another Chinese official in Paris told the United States that the PRC would not react to the US employment of force in the affair.

2. House Committee on International Relations, *Seizure of the Mayaguez, Pt. 2, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Political and Military Affairs*, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975). (Hereinafter cited as *Mayaguez Hearings* 2.)

3. Poulo Wai, though closer to Vietnam, is just about 90-statute miles from Kompong Som. It was rumored to have oil beneath it.

4. Richard G. Head, Frisco W. Short, and Robert C. McFarlane, *Crisis Resolution: Presidential Decision Making in the Mayaguez and Korean Confrontations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1978), 103; *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 212; GAO Report, 116.

5. In Roy Rowan, *The Four Days of Mayaguez* (New York: Norton, 1975), 67. President Ford apparently knew about both the Korean and the Panamanian experience when Gen Brent Schowcroft briefed him on the *Mayaguez* capture early on Monday morning, 12 May 1975. The Panamanian crew included an American citizen *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 164, and GAO Report, 116.

6. The stop at Vung Tau was known at the time of the crisis, and it served as the basis for a rumor circulating in Europe that the *Mayaguez* was on some sort of a secret Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) mission. The story asserted that she had picked up a quantity of secret CIA material that had been in use in Saigon and was to have brought it to a new site in Hong Kong. It went on to say that no private building was available for that big an operation in Hong Kong, so it was decided to set up the CIA's new operating location in Bangkok instead. The ship was en route to that site (according to the rumor) at the time the Cambodians captured it. The presence of the secret gear is supposed to explain the reason for the US haste in reaction and the reason for the air surveillance of the vessel for her entire journey to Singapore (after the release). The most exciting part of the story is that a group of CIA frogmen were sent down to Koh Tang where they emplaced underwater charges against the hull of the ship; were aerial reconnaissance to reveal that the Cambodians were opening the containers, then the ship would be blown up by remote control! "The Capture and Freeing of the SS *Mayaguez*," *Officer Review* 14 (October 1975): 9.

7. During the boarding, and later at the congressional hearings, the skipper of the *Mayaguez*, Capt Charles T. Miller, convincingly argued that there was no ammunition or armaments aboard—nor any secret intelligence equipment. He offered to open any of the containers desired for the Cambodians, but they did not exercise that option (though they did kick in all the locked doors of the crew quarters while Miller and his men were not aboard). When the vessel tied up at Singapore, Miller held a press

conference and offered to open random containers for the reporters; but, he says, the latter were tired of an exceedingly long conference and did not opt to go aboard the ship for a look. He further reported that the containers were off-loaded on the dock at Hong Kong when the *Mayaguez* got there, and the reporters then did look at about seven of them selected on a random basis and none of the newsmen reported anything suspicious. See *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 203.

8. Until very recently, three miles was the accepted limit of territorial waters for purposes of international law. Ships engaged in peaceful commerce were, even at that, permitted to penetrate the three-mile limit, exercising their right of "innocent passage." However, international law also gave the power exercising sovereignty over those territorial waters the right to board and detain such a ship for a reasonable period to verify that it is indeed engaged in "innocent passage" and not in the running of arms or espionage.

Lately, however, there has been a great growth in the number of sovereign states belonging to the United Nations as a result of the ending of the colonial empires and the emergence of the third world. The United Nations was founded upon the principle of the equality of sovereign states—that is, that Cambodia, with a little over 7 million people, has the same voting power in the General Assembly as has the United States, with more than 235 million citizens—and the same legal rights. Of course, none of the new third world states has a navy that amounts to much and, consequently, they are trying to establish as narrow a definition of "freedom of the seas" as possible and to assert as wide a band of territorial waters as they can.

The great naval powers (the United States and the USSR) and the industrial states engaged in overseas trade have opposite interests. Unfortunately for the industrial states, the third world nonnaval states far outnumber them in voting in the United Nations. Thus, there has been a very considerable movement towards the revision of the three-mile limit outward from the coasts of all states. Theoretically, none of that will interfere with the rights of innocent passage along traditional trade routes; but definitions being what they are, there is a great potential for conflict—and crises—inherent in the evolving law of the sea.

Captain Miller claimed that the Cambodians talking to him were not at all concerned with the violation of their territorial waters, but were worried about espionage. According to international law, they could therefore have stopped the *Mayaguez* for a "reasonable" time; but once they had determined that there was no illegal cargo on board nor any evidence of espionage, then they would have been required to send the vessel on its way. They had no legal right to remove the crew from the ship. With reasonable suspicion as a cause, they had the right to examine the ship even if it were outside of territorial waters.

The legal aspects of the problem were discussed from an antiestablishment viewpoint in Jordan J. Paust, "The Seizure and Recovery of the *Mayaguez*," the *Yale Law Journal* 85 (May 1976): 774–807. Though Captain Miller's interrogators were not concerned with the territorial waters issue, the propaganda of the Khmer Rouge at the time was "Khmers Tell Their Version," *Stars and Stripes* (Pacific), 18 May 1975, 1 and 24.

The Poulo Wai Islands have been a bone of contention between Cambodia and Vietnam for a long time. The closest land to them is Dao Phu Quoc Island, to which Vietnam has long held clear title (the author landed at the airport at Duong Dong on that island several times in 1968). In fact, Duong Dong itself is very much closer to Cambodia than are the Poulo Wai Islands. Further, during the summer of 1975, the two countries fought it out in those islands; Vietnam won and now seems to have established its claim firmly.

9. *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 184. Washington is 11 hours earlier than Cambodia—which means that the boarding took place at 3:18 a.m. Washington time. When this time differential involves a different date, then Cambodia is a day further along than Washington—Tuesday morning in Cambodia is Monday evening in Washington.

10. Lt Col Donald E. Carlile, "The *Mayaguez* Incident, Crisis Management," *Military Review* 56 (October 1976): 4; GAO Report, 117.

11. GAO Report; Comdr J. A. Messegee, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez:* The Patrol Squadron Skipper," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 102 (November 1976): 93–97; Capt John B. Taylor, "Air Mission *Mayaguez*," *Airman* 20 (February 1976): 39–47; Gen Richard H. Ellis, USAF, and Lt Col Frank B. Horton III, "Flexibility—A State of Mind," *Strategic Review* 4 (Winter 1976): 26–36; Capt Thomas D. Des Brisay, "Fourteen Hours at Koh Tang," in *USAF Southeast Asia Monograph Series*, vol. 3, ed. Maj A.J.C. Lavalle (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977).

12. *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 117.

13. Messegee, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*," 94. That interval seemed like an inordinate delay to the congressional speakers during later hearings on the subject; but at the far end of the chain, Comdr J. A. Messegee claims that he had his initial bird aloft in less than an hour after he first heard that there was a ship in trouble. The aircraft in question was not the one on alert at Cubi, but one that started from a standing stop at U Tapao. Having been the commander of a squadron of aircraft very similar to the P-3—the C-130—I agree with Messegee's remark; that, indeed, was an achievement. The idea of finding a crew and aircraft both so ready that they could be briefed, inspected, flight-planned, and airborne from a forward operating location, in a foreign land, well after working hours in peacetime, all in 57 minutes, is mind-boggling. Though the commander does not say so, it seems probable that the man in charge at U Tapao must somehow have been anticipating trouble. The six hours between the incident and the launch troubled the members of the investigating committee until Deputy Secretary of Defense William P. Clements explained it all to them. House Committee on International Relations, *Seizure of the Mayaguez, Pt. 3, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Political and Military Affairs*, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), 292–93. (Hereinafter referred to as *Mayaguez Hearings* 3.)

14. There was another Sea-Land Corporation sister ship of the *Mayaguez*, the SS *Ponce*, plying the same waters and engaged in the same kind of work as the *Mayaguez*. It was not at that moment in the vicinity of the Gulf of Thailand. *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 205.

15. Messegee, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*," 95. The aircraft involved was the first to receive battle damage in the crisis when it took a .50-caliber round through its vertical stabilizer.

16. Ibid., 96.

17. Ibid. The crew need not have worried. Though Vietnam had captured some F-5 jets two weeks earlier from the South Vietnamese and though they had some of their own MiGs of various models, it turns out there was little love lost between them and the Khmer Rouge, and they were unlikely to interfere even if they could. The P-3C could outrun the Cambodian Air Force T-28s even had the Khmer been able and willing to get them airborne.

18. "Aircraft Play Major Role in Ship Incident," *Aviation Week and Space Technology* 102 (19 May 1975): 23; Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 115–16.

19. Gerald R. Ford, *The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford: A Time to Heal* (New York: Berkley, 1979), 267–68. There was a good deal of speculation in the congressional hearings and in the press that the secondary objectives had come to take priority and even that there were undeclared personal objectives that skewed events.

20. Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 107.

21. Ibid., 111.

22. GAO Report, 88.

23. Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 111.

24. GAO Report, 118.

25. Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 117; Taylor, "Air Mission *Mayaguez*," 40; "23 GIs Die in Thailand Helo Crash," *Stars and Stripes* (Pacific), 15 May 1975, 1. The *Stars and Stripes* picked up the story from the United Press International wire service and published it on Thursday, which makes any notion that the government was trying to hide the number of casualties in the helicopter crash pure nonsense.

26. *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 189; Roy Rowan, *The Four Days of Mayaguez* (New York: Norton, 1975), 129–57; Taylor, "Air Mission *Mayaguez*," 40.

27. GAO Report, 89, says that the investigating team tried to discover why the site had not been attacked, but was unable to do so. The DOD, it said, could not find a record of the request but did not assert that it had not been made. The GAO investigators got their information from interviews with the marines involved.

28. Col J. M. Johnson, Jr, USMC, Lt Col R. W. Austin, USMC, and Maj D. A. Quinlan, USMC, "Individual Heroism Overcame Awkward Command Relationships and Bad Information Off the Cambodian Coast," *Marine Corps Gazette* 61 (October 1977): 28; GAO Report, 90; Taylor, "Air Mission *Mayaguez*," 46.

29. Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 115.

30. Ibid., 122; GAO Report, 95, outlines several advantages that would have arisen from a delay, but stops short of saying that the decision should have been made to launch the attack on Friday instead of

Thursday—given the limitations of the information available to the decision makers on Wednesday evening.

31. Ford, *Autobiography*, 272.

32. Ibid., 273. The problem with that assessment was that the first strike was scheduled in at 7:45 a.m. (Cambodian time), more than an hour after the marine landings on Koh Tang, and simultaneously with the boarding of the *Mayaguez*. The first landings at the island took place at 6:08 a.m. (Cambodian time). Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 138, also cites the prevention of reinforcement as the purpose of the bombing.

33. "Ford's Rescue Operation," *Newsweek*, 26 May 1975, 6–9.

34. GAO Report, 68–69.

35. Ford, *Autobiography*, 272.

36. Capt Walter J. Wood, USMC, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez:* The Company Commander," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 102 (November 1976): 100–2.

37. GAO Report, 101, states the following:

> In retrospect, the final Marine assault and the bombing of the Cambodian mainland did not influence the Cambodian decision to release the crew. This was not known and probably could not have been known at the time. However, certain U.S. actions, for example, the sinking of gunboats and U.S. air activity in the area, probably did influence that decision.
>
> Defense agreed with our assessment that the Marine assault and bombing of the mainland did not influence the Cambodian decision to release the crew.

Yet, Gen Richard H. Ellis, USAF, "Flexibility—A State of Mind," and Lt Col Frank B. Horton III, USAF, *Strategic Review* 4 (Winter 1976): 34, states the following:

> Finally, it was the timely availability of responsive Air Force assets threatening air strikes, in addition to Navy air strikes against the mainland, that we feel were key factors in bringing about the release of the crew.

38. GAO Report, 124.

39. Maj J. B. Hendricks, USMC, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez:* The Battalion Operations Officer," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 102 (November 1976): 104.

40. Ibid., 105. Hendricks says that the plan was to conduct the landings on the Koh Tang Island and the boarding of the *Mayaguez* simultaneously, but, as we have seen, the latter took place more than an hour later. He also says that air strikes and the use of riot control agents to prepare the landing zone were ruled out because of concern for the safety of the *Mayaguez* crew. Yet, the previous day, according to Capt Charles T. Miller's testimony in *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 189, when the crew was inbound to the mainland onboard the fishing boat, they were thoroughly gassed in the full knowledge that there were "possible" Caucasians onboard. Des Brisay, "Fourteen Hours," 107, 111–13, 123 and 149, reports that thirteen lives were lost in the downing of one of the choppers that was lost on the eastern beach, and one more person died in the helicopter that went down after it had inserted its troops on the western beach and was trying to withdraw out to sea. The fifteenth man was killed as the command group tried to work its way northward on the western shore toward the main body of Marines there, and three more suffered unknown fates during the day and were declared missing.

41. Des Brisay, "Fourteen Hours," 125–28.

42. Ibid.

43. Johnson, Austin, and Quinlan, "Individual Heroism," 31–32. This article was coauthored by the commander who was on the island at the time, Lt Col R. W. Austin, USMC, and published in the October 1977 issue of the *Marine Corps Gazette*, a nongovernmental magazine. It is explicit in stating that Colonel Austin did not know about the recovery of the *Mayaguez* crew when he demanded that the order to withhold the second wave be reversed. It also says that he intended to make a sweep of the entire island in search of the American mariners at the time the second wave was inserted and that his first knowledge of the recovery came when one of the marines who came in with that wave told him about it.

On the other hand, in the congressional hearings on the topic on 12 September 1975, Brig Gen A. W. Atkinson, USAF, assistant director of operations for command and control, JCS, testified in explicit terms that the marine commander on the scene had demanded that the second wave be inserted so that a safe withdrawal could be made, *Mayaguez Hearings* 3, 315.

Des Brisay in "Fourteen Hours" makes no mention of the pirouettes that the second wave was put through and does not really address the reasons for its insertion after the *Mayaguez* crew had been recovered. That account is a part of an official government publication; in its original form, it was a report of the Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) with an introduction written by Gen Louis L. Wilson, Jr, then commander in chief of PACAF. Neither do President Ford's memoirs nor Head's *Presidential Decision Making*—itself having the character of a quasi-official study—mention the antics of the second wave nor the reasons for its landing. As the limiting factor all day long had been the number of choppers available, and as Colonel Austin makes no mention of any need for additional troops to make the withdrawal safe, it is hard to see how the insertion of another hundred or so would make the withdrawal safe, the extraction more, instead of less, feasible. One more helicopter was put out of action during the insertion of the second wave, and that left just four to take out approximately 220 troops—but the work was greatly facilitated by the arrival of the *Coral Sea* at just about the time the second wave was going in.

The GAO Report, 92–94, reiterates the notion that the marine assault commander required the reinforcements for the safe withdrawal, while also pointing out that he still thought the *Mayaguez* crew's location was unknown; but it is unclear whether the investigators got that information from the DOD report to the congressional hearings or from interviews with the marines. Maj J. B. Hendricks, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*," 107, who was also on the island confirms that the first news of the recovery of the *Mayaguez* crew came in with the troops of the second wave.

44. Des Brisay, "Fourteen Hours," 148.

45. Ibid., 149–50.

46. Head, Short, and McFarlane, *Presidential Decision Making*, 143.

47. "Mutineers Seize Khmer Boat," *Washington Post*, 20 May 1975, A-1.

48. Comdr Robert A. Peterson, US Navy, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*: The Destroyer Escort's Skipper," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 102 (November 1976): 97–100; Wood, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*," 100–4; and Captain Miller's testimony in *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 185–225.

49. Peterson, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*," 97–100; Word, " 'Mayday' for the *Mayaguez*," 100–4, *Mayaguez Hearings* 2, 185–225.

50. Ford, *Autobiography*, 272–76.

51. Ibid., 272–73.

52. GAO Report, 124–25.

53. Ford, *Autobiography*, 272–76.

54. GAO Report, 125.

55. Ibid., 97, 125. According to the GAO Report, 88, the *Coral Sea* was located 950 miles (presumably nautical miles) from the scene when she received orders to proceed toward the potential battleground. That occurred at 2:14 a.m. (Cambodian time), on Tuesday morning. When she launched her first cycle (according to the same report, 99, 124), she was still 185 miles from Kompong Som. At 7:05 a.m., Thursday, she had traveled 765 miles in 50 hours and 51 minutes. That works out to a speed of 15.04 knots. That is not to say that an earlier arrival would have been good. The change in behavior on the part of the Cambodian decision makers was exactly that desired by Washington. Consequently, any other outcome would have been worse, not better. Thus, if the *Coral Sea* had gotten there sooner and launched her attacks sooner, the Khmer decision makers might have, nonetheless, persisted in their decision to release the crew. But, they might have been so angered as to retaliate in the only way open to them: reversing their decision to free Captain Miller and his sailors. As it happened, the bombs did not start falling until the *Mayaguez* crew was beyond the reach of the Khmers.

56. Ford, *Autobiography*, 272.

57. It is possible to build a case that it was fortunate things worked out that way. Perhaps we unconsciously applied exactly the right amount of force in a low-visibility way to achieve the results we desired. Had the US Air Force units been available for attacks on the high-visibility targets on the mainland, those strikes might have come earlier than the ones from the *Coral Sea*—while the *Mayaguez* crew was still within the grasp of the Khmers. It is conceivable that this would have so engaged the hypernationalistic feelings of the adversary decision makers that they would have reversed their decision to release ship and crew in order to retaliate against Captain Miller and his people.

58. "The *Mayaguez* Incident," *Commonweal* 52 (6 June 1975): 163, is just one example that went so far as to question the sanity of the attack.

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CHAPTER 4

THE BAY OF PIGS INCIDENT: INTERMEDIATE CRISIS

Case studies of the Yom Kippur crisis of 1973, the *Mayaguez* incident of 1975, and the various African rescue operations cover three of the main parts of the third world: the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. The Bay of Pigs crisis (1961) not only provides us with a case of intermediate complexity but also broadens our geographical sample by adding a crisis from a fourth part of the developing world, Latin America (fig. 8). Clearly the Latin American context is quite different from the Asian, African, and greater part of the Middle Eastern arenas. The living standards there are generally not so low as elsewhere in the third world, and the Latin Americans have much more in common with Western culture than do most of the other people of the developing world.

DEVELOPING OPTIONS

Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba in 1959. At first, to many Americans that seemed all to the good. The former dictator, Fulgencio Batista, had been an unsavory man with whom to do business, and in the beginning Castro appeared to be a leader dedicated to liberal, democratic principles. While Dwight D. Eisenhower remained president, relations with Cuba went from bad to worse as the new Cuban dictator revealed his authoritarian tendencies and moved even closer to his domestic Communists. Vice President Richard M. Nixon, among others, began to feel that American policy would be well served were Castro to be deposed. As the Cubans developed their connection with the Soviets, more and more Americans came to the same conclusion.

To help things along, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) developed a plan to insert guerrillas into Cuba and to resupply them. As Eisenhower's administration neared its end, Castro was succeeding in eradicating the guerrillas already there; and the CIA plan gradually evolved toward becoming a full-fledged amphibious

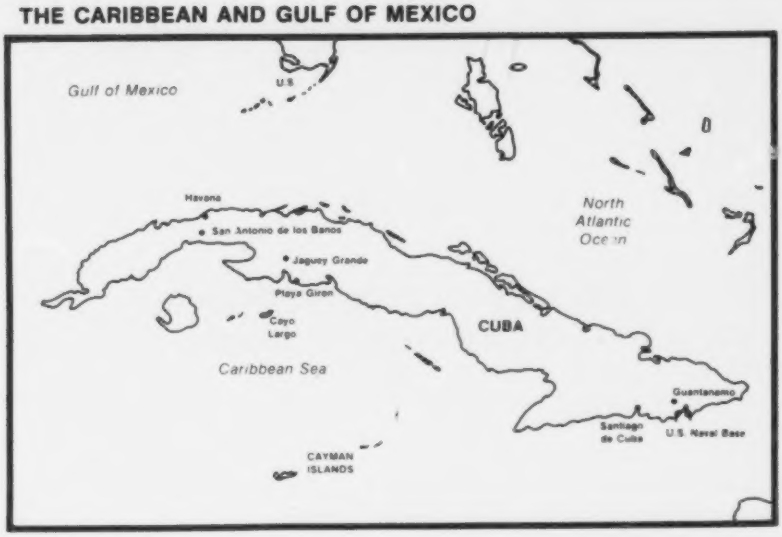
THE CARIBBEAN AND GULF OF MEXICO
Gulf of Mexico
U.S.
Havana
San Antonio de los Banos
Jaguey Grande
Playa Giron
Cayo Largo
CUBA
North Atlantic Ocean
Caribbean Sea
Guantanamo
Santiago de Cuba
U.S. Naval Base
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Figure 8. The Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

invasion at Cochinos Bay (the Bay of Pigs) in South Central Cuba, using Cuban exiles from around Miami as the troops. It was assumed that a successful lodgement would be the catalyst for a massive uprising against the tyranny of Fidel Castro. Air superiority over the beachheads was a vital part of the plan. After John F. Kennedy won the election of 1960, he was briefed on the plan and the point of air superiority. Eisenhower had never approved the invasion, but after consulting the other high officers of government (most of whom did not raise serious objections), the new president ordered it carried out during the middle of April 1961.

DOCTRINE AND THE BAY OF PIGS PLAN

Classical air doctrine demands that the first step in any campaign is to assure that friendly forces have at least air superiority, if not supremacy, over the battlefield and, if possible, throughout the theater. Once that air superiority is established, then tactical air assets should be turned to the ground support missions of close air support (CAS), air interdiction, reconnaissance, and tactical airlift. Air superiority can be established in two general ways, through offensive or defensive action. The former would be done through air-to-ground attacks against the adversary's air power at its home bases, and the latter through defensive measures when the enemy force is airborne over the battlefield or friendly territory. Defensive measures can achieve air superiority in two ways, first by the use of interceptors in air-to-air work and second by the use of guns and missiles in a surface-to-air mode—or usually through some combination of both ground-based and airborne air defenses.

Another item of classical air doctrine, and practically all military doctrine, is that the achievement of surprise is perhaps the most highly valued of all the principles of war. Surprise, of course, can be achieved in many ways: through mounting an attack at an unexpected time or with unexpected weapons, weight, violence, directions, or tactics.

It is not remarkable that the CIA's plan, initially at least, was developed in full conformity with the tenets of US air doctrine. Gen Charles W. Cabell, USAF, was the deputy director of the CIA, and having graduated from West Point with the class of 1925, he was around throughout the formative days of the US air arm. Doubtless he was well versed on air doctrine, but he did not become much involved in the detailed planning of the Bay of Pigs operation, for his job was largely an administrative one.

Doctrine comes from an officer's training and education through the years and from the current set of doctrinal manuals. Doctrine outlines ways in which wars and battles *should be* fought; strategies outline the ways that *particular* wars and particular campaigns *will be* waged. Doctrine, then, is *one* of the inputs to strategy; the others are the intelligence describing the particular situation facing the strategy makers and the objectives set for them by their political superiors. In theory, then, the Bay of Pigs objectives should have been provided by the intelligence branches of the CIA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State. How did all this work in the Bay of Pigs crisis?

The Bay of Pigs air plan was developed in the offices of the Central Intelligence Agency, not the Department of Defense. It seems that the planners had a clear grasp of air doctrine and tried to apply it in a logical way. During the latter phases of the planning cycle, and then during the implementation, perceived political requirements were permitted to so change the plan that it no longer squared with the requirements of doctrine. The Bay of Pigs invasion presents as clear a case as might be found of the faulty application of air doctrine with disastrous results—which is not to place the blame on the President alone, for it was the duty of the specialists in the subject to cause him to understand the deviation or to resign their offices.

STRATEGY MAKING

The initial versions of the CIA plan for Castro did not have much of an air element in them. The operation was to have been a guerrilla campaign, and air power was to be largely confined to the insertion of guerrillas and the resupply of them and the people they joined in the Cuban homeland. After the plan transitioned from a guerrilla to a conventional amphibious concept, Richard Bissell brought in Col Stanley Beerli, USAF, to handle the air power aspect of the operation.[1] Bissell had risen to fame as the manager of the famous CIA U-2 project, and Beerli had been one of his most trusted lieutenants in that effort.[2] Beerli's first preference was to establish air superiority at the outset through one massive attack on Castro's air force, to be flown starting the day before the landings. Thus, he would have taken

Figure 9. B-26 bombers were the sole aircraft to fly the air attacks of the Cuban Expeditionary Force in the Bay of Pigs crisis.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

the orthodox approach by seeking command of the air as the first step and by trying to do it by surprise.[3]

Of course, Beerli and everyone in the CIA wanted to serve the ultimate political objectives of overthrowing Castro and freeing the Western Hemisphere of Soviet-Communist influence. However, when the Department of State was briefed on the plan, it raised objections based on political grounds. According to Secretary Dean Rusk, the massiveness of the air strikes contemplated would make US involvement obvious. The air strikes had to be kept small so that the propaganda assertions that they originated from within Castro's air force would be believable. Moreover, the State Department wanted the initial raids to occur earlier so that the cover story would have time to percolate in world opinion. This would better protect the United States against charges of aggression.[4] Thus, the need for the precedence of political factors tended to conflict directly with the military need for surprise—and for mass as well.

The strategy that emerged, then, was that air superiority would be the first step, but that it would be achieved in two phases. Both phases would consist of air-to-ground attacks against Castro's diminutive air force. The first would coincide with a diversionary raid to be held during the early morning hours of D − 2 (day of attack minus two days) Saturday, 15 April 1961. The diversion would be aimed at the coast of Oriente Province and the extreme eastern end of Cuba, not far from the US Navy base at Guantánamo. The accompanying air attack would be flown entirely by the B-26s (fig. 9) of the Cuban Expeditionary Force (CEF).[5] The seaborne invaders would already be underway from Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, heading for the south coast of Cuba, but no air attacks seem to have been planned for D − 1 (Sunday).[6] Reconnaissance flights would be made by U-2s to gather target information for the next attack, which would be held at first light on D-day. That strike was to be

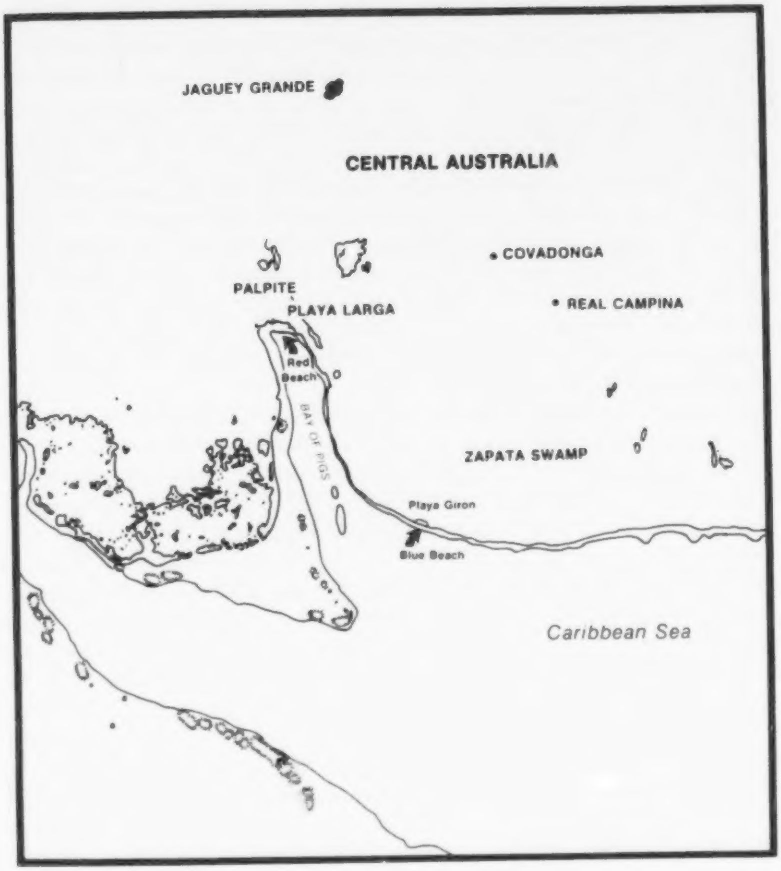
JAGUEY GRANDE
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
COVADONGA
PALPITE
PLAYA LARGA
REAL CAMPINA
Red Beach
BAY OF PIGS
ZAPATA SWAMP
Playa Giron
Blue Beach
Caribbean Sea

Figure 10. The Bay of Pigs

carried out with the maximum B-26 force available, and the intent was to destroy those Castro aircraft identified by the U-2 photos as having survived the attack of D – 2.

With Castro's air force having been destroyed on the ground through surprise attack, there would be no need for air cover over the landing beaches and the B-26s would revert to the conventional ground support missions of close air support and interdiction. The interdiction mission seemed particularly promising because there were then but two roads through the Zapata Swamps that almost completely surrounded the beachhead area and there were very few of Castro's military forces there. The two roads were built on causeways, and there was no possibility for vehicles to pull off of them under the jungle canopy—truly an ideal interdiction situation. The easternmost ingress route (fig. 10) was the one running from Real

Campina through Covadonga and San Blas and thence down to the coast at a point just east of the village of Girón and its airstrip. The westernmost route came from Jagüey Grande through Palpite and to a place just west of Playa Larga (Long Beach) at the head of the Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs). The distance between Girón and Playa Larga is about 20 miles.

One of the first objectives of the amphibious forces was to be the capture and clearing of the Girón airfield. As soon as that was done, some B-26s were to be moved in to commence operations there. Their ground elements were embarked in the García Line ship, SS *Caribe*, which was to leave Puerto Cabezas on D − 3. The redeployment would have a radical multiplying effect on the combat power of the B-26s, which then would not have to waste a great deal of time flying to and from Nicaragua.[7] It seems fair to assert that the doctrine informing this part of the plan and the intelligence input were quite good, though many sources have complained that the CIA intelligence estimates grossly underrated, or ignored, the combat potential of Castro's T-33s.[8]

Air transport had an important part in the strategy. From the very beginning air transport was assigned the mission of attempting to resupply the guerrillas. During the development of the strategy, there had been some talk about inserting the First Battalion of the CEF on D − 1, just before dark, but the final scheme was that it was to be divided into two forces and inserted at daybreak on D-day. One force was to be air dropped around San Blas for the purpose of blocking the easternmost ingress route somewhere to the north of that town; the other was to do the same on the western route at a place somewhat to the north of Playa Larga.[9] Of course, the standard material was to be dropped with the troops, and the surface formations coming up from the beaches were supposed to join the paratroopers as soon as possible after the landings. During the early hours of the invasion, the airlift forces would be engaged in aerial deliveries to units requiring replenishment, and, as soon as the airfield at Girón was secured, they would shift to the air landing mode at that airhead. The airborne element of the strategy seemed well enough integrated with the interdiction mission.

Of course, Castro's troops would soon realize that they would be safe from the B-26s were they to make their movements at night; but the airborne troopers blocking the ingress routes could hold up the advancing columns until daylight when the B-26s would be able to destroy them. This was deemed feasible because the incoming columns would be mostly confined to the causeways and would not be able to deploy into attack formations or attempt flanking movements. Thus, the light airborne movements would be capable of holding off much larger formations long enough for the B-26s to come to their aid.

Except for the fact that dividing the air strikes at Castro's air power into two waves and making the first the lighter of the two gave away the advantage of surprise, the air strategy conformed to air doctrine and was based on sound intelligence estimates. It may be true that the combat potential of the T-33s of the enemy was underestimated, but the strategy did not envision their ever getting into combat.[10] Certainly T-33s are just as vulnerable as any other aircraft and, as we shall see, only two of them survived the attack of D − 2. So the air strategy itself did not seem that farfetched.

ORDER OF BATTLE

Cuban sources make it seem that Castro fought the good fight hopelessly outnumbered, but they manipulate the figures to polish the dictator's reputation for sagacity. The decisive factors in the air battle of the Bay of Pigs were combat time over the battlefield and relative aircraft performance. The distance from the CEF combat base at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, to the Bay of Pigs was so great that the superior maintenance and armament of its B-26s counted for little. The proximity of Castro's air bases to the battlefield enabled his air force to generate a disproportionately high sortie rate notwithstanding very poor supply, maintenance, and training.

ORDER OF BATTLE
14 April 1961

	CUBA	*CEF*	*US* (On scene)
Fighter-Bombers	12	0	1 sq. (US Navy A-4)
Bombers	12	16	0
Transports	N/A	12	0
Jet	Trainers	7	N/A
Reconnaissance	0	0	As required, U-2

Castro could get only six airplanes airborne on Monday morning: two B-26s, two T-33s, and two Sea Furies. The latter was a first-line British fighter of the last-generation reciprocating engine with a five-bladed propeller and high performance, but it was difficult to maintain.[11] A large part of Castro's pilot force was then in Czechoslovakia undergoing MiG-15 transition training, and the remnants were neither generally current nor well trained. According to Pedro Miguel Escalona in a Cuban government journal, only 10 pilots flew in combat between 17 and 20 April, two of whom were admitted to have been killed on 17 April. They were able to fly a total of 70 sorties, which is remarkable, if true, considering the few airplanes that were flyable.[12]

IMPLEMENTATION

The Bay of Pigs invasion might not have succeeded even with the perfect implementation of the air strategy, but important changes were made during the course of that strategy's application that may have made the failure inevitable—and that certainly did lead to much recrimination in the aftermath. We have seen that both the CIA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) preferred a strategy that would have achieved air superiority through a massive and surprise air attack against Castro's air force while it was on the ground. They also desired that this strike take place very shortly before the landings were scheduled.

However, several weeks before D-day, political considerations brought up by the Department of State caused the dilution of the strike by dividing it into two parts, the first of which was to be flown by 16 aircraft about 48 hours before H-hour, the time of the landings and the second strike. The three main airfields of the Cuban air force were to be the targets, and the flyers of the CEF were directed to concentrate on the airplanes rather than on maintenance and other facilities.[13] The force of this raid was limited in order to make it appear to be within the capability of defecting B-26s from Castro's air force itself. Of course, this dilution strategy was a violation of the military principle of mass—one should apply the maximum force possible at the decisive point—but it did properly subordinate military considerations to political ones.

The eight B-26s assigned to the D − 2 raid were newly modified versions and substantially superior to those in Castro's air force. Each had eight 50-caliber machine guns in the nose and each barrel was supplied with 260 rounds. They carried a bomb load of either eight 250 pounders or six of 500 pounds. Each one of them had eight five-inch rockets mounted under the wings. The tail guns and gunners had been removed to make room for added weight in fuel and other munitions.[14]

The CEF air force launched nine aircraft during the hours of darkness early Saturday morning, 15 April. One with fake battle damage was headed for the Miami, Florida, airport to generate a cover story, and the other eight were bound for the three airports in Cuba harboring combat aircraft: Campo Libertad at the capital, San Antonio de los Baños about 25 miles southwest of Havana, and Santiago de Cuba at the far eastern end of the island. The ingress was done at low altitude in case Castro had unknown radar warning facilities (it seems that he did not), and more or less complete tactical surprise was achieved. The B-26s made their first passes unmolested, and though some antiaircraft guns did get on the line before the raid was completed, none of Castro's airplanes were able to get airborne in time to do any damage to the raiders.

The strike took place just after daylight and by midmorning five of the nine aircraft dispatched made it back to the airfield at Puerto Cabezas. One had deliberately flown into Miami, one had been shot down by the antiaircraft fire at the airport at Havana, one had been so damaged by antiaircraft fire that it landed at the naval air station at Key West, and a fourth landed at a British field at the Cayman Islands. The latter crew was recovered though the airplane was not, and the pilot of the plane landing at Miami was soon returned to Nicaragua. Thus, though only one crew was killed, four airplanes were no longer available for the subsequent campaign.

The pilot reported that the Saturday morning raid destroyed many aircraft, but subsequent photographs showed that only five airplanes had definitely been eliminated, and the damage to the others was impossible to determine. One of the five was a T-33 and unknown to the CEF; another "T-Bird" had exploded in flight on the evening of the 14th. That left only two operational jets available to Castro.[15]

Meanwhile, Castro was pushed into immediate action by the raid. The first he had known about it was when he heard the bombs bursting at Campo Libertad. He immediately set his internal security forces to rounding up those suspected of disloyalty, and at least 100,000 people were temporarily arrested. He immediately held a funeral for those killed by the B-26 raid and turned it into a media event of the first order in an attempt to whip up national unity at home and sympathy abroad.

Finally, he ordered his remaining crews to strip alert, and they implemented the order by keeping two pilots at every airplane, one in the cockpit and one resting under the wings.[16] This act worsened the odds that the CEF B-26s would have caught Castro's remaining aircraft on the ground had they flown the second strike of the planned strategy.

Political Impacts on the Air Plan

D − 1 was a stand-down day for the air force of the exile brigade. The B-26 flyers, having returned from the combat zone, recuperated and were engaged in briefings and planning for their D-day missions. The airlifters likewise were occupied with planning the airdrop sortie, to be carried out at daybreak on D-day.

In Washington, a further and more radical departure from the strategy was germinating. Adlai Stevenson had twice been the presidential nominee of the Democratic party and had twice lost the national elections to the personally popular Dwight Eisenhower. Now that "Ike" had retired from national politics and had been replaced as head of the Republican party by the less popular Richard Nixon, John F. Kennedy had come along and won the Democratic nomination and the subsequent election, but only by the narrowest of margins. Thus, the President's political position was none too secure, and he could not afford the alienation of the still-powerful Stevenson.

It seems possible that Stevenson was inadvertently misinformed about the origins of the B-26 attack of D − 2, and he publicly so insisted on the truth of what turned out to be a total fabrication that it resulted in his utter humiliation before the entire world. According to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, the political turmoil continued on Sunday morning. For a time, Secretary of State Rusk himself seems not to have known the full details about the aircraft landing in Florida. Schlesinger reports that Rusk decided sometime Sunday that he had inadvertently put Adlai Stevenson into an untenable position, that the strikes scheduled for D-day morning could no longer be plausibly denied by the United States, and that they would have to be canceled to preserve the larger interests of the country.[17]

By the time that Dean Rusk had come to his conclusion, it was late afternoon and he and MacGeorge Bundy took up the issue with the President, who was spending the weekend in Virginia. They persuaded him over the telephone to cancel the mission, and he so ordered, apparently without checking with either the CIA or the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[18]

D − 1

About 9 p.m. on D − 1, Bundy sent the word to General Cabell at the CIA via telephone and quickly departed on a mission to New York for Rusk—to explain events to Stevenson. Meanwhile, Cabell and Richard Bissell went to Rusk to try to reverse the decision. They argued their case long and hard, and Rusk called the

President again and explained their objections. Still, he remarked to Kennedy that he had the sense that though the cancellation was serious, it was not "vital." Rusk thereupon offered the phone to Cabell who was still in the room, but the general declined to present his case directly.[19] Thus, the cancellation stood, and the word was flashed immediately to Nicaragua where the pilots were already in their cockpits preparing for takeoff. They had to shut down and be rebriefed concerning the close air support missions over the beachhead.[20]

Air superiority clearly had not been established; General Cabell knew this and had explained the situation to the Secretary of State. Dean Rusk, in turn, had explained the dangers to the President over the telephone in Cabell's presence, and the President appeared satisfied with the validity of the explanation and did not change the decision to cancel the air strikes. The Joint Chiefs were not informed that evening and did not find out about the cancellation until the next morning when it was far too late to do anything about it.[21] The President had given his final authorization for the execution of the assault at 1:45 p.m. on D − 1 and canceled the air strikes against Castro's airfields at 9:30 p.m. that same day.[22]

At the time the B-26 crews at Puerto Cabezas got the word about the scrubbing of their mission, the frogmen off the Cuban shore were already preparing to go to the beach to mark the landing sites. They inadvertently alerted Castro at 1:30 a.m., which gave him plenty of time to order his own airmen to take off before dawn to strike at the invasion forces at first light. The Cuban fliers had directions to concentrate on the landing ships. The CEF B-26s were rebriefed to maintain a continuous cover over the beaches by two B-26s, and some of its C-46s and C-54s were scheduled to deliver loads of paratroopers at two drop zones (DZ) behind the beaches, also at first light. The landing ships were to have discharged their troops and a designated part of their cargoes and withdrawn from the battle zone before the dawn. However, the poor condition of the unloading machinery of the García Line ships plus the inadequate landing craft supplied the SS *Houston* made that impossible; both she and the *Río Escondido* were still close by the shore when the sun came up—and when Castro's airplanes arrived.

D-day

The Cuban air force had but six airplanes in operational condition Monday morning, all flying out of the base at San Antonio de los Baños, about 95 nautical miles away from Blue Beach (the amphibious designation for the landing site at Playa Girón, just to the east of the Bay of Pigs). This force, according to a Castro account, flew 17 sorties on D-day, and was launched before the dawn so as to begin the attacks at first light.[23] The air-sea battle of Monday was decisive, and the ground forces were doomed even before they were fairly engaged. By midmorning, two of the landing force's five ships had been sunk. The *Houston* had been under attack for some time when a British-manufactured Sea Fury launched a rocket attack at her. One of the projectiles penetrated the side of the vessel and passed through its bottom without exploding.[24] It did ignite a fire, and damage control was difficult because the fire hoses had been hit by machine gun fire. Though the blaze was extinguished, it was impossible to stanch the hole, so the captain ran the ship aground near the western shore, quite some distance across the bay from the action. The greater part of the people still aboard survived, but they were never a factor in the fighting.[25]

The *Río Escondido* had already disembarked her troops, but still had a 10-day supply of ammunition and the commander's communications van on board when she came under attack. She was loaded with highly volatile material, and some of it was exposed on deck. A Sea Fury also was responsible for the successful attack on her. The *Río Escondido* was hit with rockets and exploded, and went to the bottom off the beach at Girón. One of the family members of the García Line's owners, Eduardo García, was aboard one of the other ships and was watching these proceedings. When the second ship went down, he issued orders to his captains to withdraw the surviving vessels and told the CIA that he would not bring them back in until he was assured of jet cover overhead.[26] Thus, as the whole logistical base of the landing force was removed by midday, and as the leading elements of the ground forces did not begin to engage important units of Castro's militia until later in the afternoon, it seems logical to infer that the air battle was decisive.

The mission to which the CEF B-26s had reverted after President Kennedy canceled their air superiority strike was one of close air support—maintaining a continuous presence of two B-26s over the beaches on call for use by the troops against engaged ground targets. There were, of course, many difficulties with this. First, the Cuban fighters, and especially the jets, had not been eliminated and had such a great performance edge over the B-26s that the mission could not be conducted securely. The lack of radar on the Cuban side was removed as a handicap because the CEF airplanes would be available as targets any time the Cuban T-33s came to the battle zone. Moreover, the fact that they were assigned to loiter there gave the enemy ground forces time to call in their interceptors by radio or even telephone. The great distance from the exile base made the whole thing a highly uneconomical proposition. Still, one effective close-air-support strike at Red Beach (the landing site at the head of the Bay of Pigs) hinted at what might have been had air superiority been established and the B-26 force moved into the Girón airport. Erneido Oliva, the second in command of the brigade and in charge of operations at Red Beach, was heavily engaged with the first echelons of Castro's militia coming down from the north. Two B-26s turned up, and the Cuban air force T-33s were not on the scene. Oliva called them in for a strike on Castro's advancing forces, and they worked mayhem, for the militia was stuck in plain sight on the road. Out of nearly 900 men in that battalion only a handful survived.[27] The two CEF attackers tarried so long with their repeated passes, though, that the T-33s had time to come back to the battleground and get them both.[28]

During the course of D-day, then, the Cuban air force succeeded in disrupting the logistical base of the entire invasion, and made a serious dent in the CEF air force. Though only four of the exile's B-26s were shot down, two more did not make it back to base. As four had also been removed from the order of battle in various ways on Saturday, D − 2, the original force of 16 had been reduced so that only six serviceable planes were still available at Puerto Cabezas. The Castro flyers did not have it all their own way. Two of their own B-26s were lost, one to the gunners on the *Houston* and another to those on the *Blagar*. Further, two of their Sea Furies were shot down, also by antiaircraft fire.[29] Still, Castro had both of his T-33s, and they had been the airplanes that had gotten *all* the enemy "kills" on the first day.

Meanwhile, the airlifters of the CEF air force had not gone without losses of their own. Their drops were partially successful, and the paratroopers did some good work until the collapse of the logistical system. The First Battalion (airborne) of the Cuban Expeditionary Force was embarked in five C-46 Commandos and one C-54 Skymaster just after midnight on Sunday (fig. 11). The airlifters began their takeoffs at about 1:55 a.m., and after passing the US Navy aircraft carrier *Essex* and her escort destroyers en route, made their landfall around Girón just at daybreak. The total number of paratroopers embarked was 177. A part of the force was dropped just inland from there at the head of the Bay of Pigs but apparently landed near an enemy strong point and was quickly eliminated as a factor in the battle in that sector. (The Second Battalion, which landed from the sea, was able, nonetheless, to get far enough inland to take up a good blocking position on the westernmost ingress route to the battle zone.) The second part of the airborne force was dropped more successfully at the town of San Blas behind the beach at Girón, though a part of its ammunition was lost due to faulty drops. It established a good blocking position on the easternmost ingress route and was soon joined by additional troops coming from the Blue Beach landings. Most of Monday was available for the consolidation of the position, and it was late in the day before Castro's artillery was in place to start a bombardment. The transports did not have a free ride. During the egress, one of Castro's B-26s came upon two of the Commandos and tried to shoot them down. One C-46, flown by Captain Eduardo Ferrer, had a narrow escape and was finally saved as it flew over the invasion fleet, whose ships opened fire on its pursuer. Apparently, another C-46 was not that lucky; while under pursuit, it was either stalled out by its pilot or accidentally hit by antiaircraft fire and it crashed into the sea.[30]

The sinking of the *Río Escondido* and the *Houston*, along with the retreat of the remaining three ships of the García Line fleet, made it quite apparent at the end of D-day that a shortage of ammunition would soon be a critical problem. The morning airlift waves returned to Puerto Cabezas near midday, and one of the C-46 crews was "recycled" with hardly two hours' rest. The plan was to make an air landing at the Girón airport at about dusk under the escort of a B-26 carrying munitions only for its machine guns. The C-46 staggered off the ground, according to its crew, with an overload of 5,000 pounds or so—which is considerable for a plane of the World War II generation with only two reciprocating engines. When that mission was approaching the Cuban coast, the T-33s were tearing up a flight of CEF B-26s that had preceded it, and the C-46 had to turn around and return the munitions to Nicaragua.[31] As the need for ammunition became even greater, yet another aerial resupply effort was generated, this time using parachutes. A force of four Skymasters and two Commandos was dispatched with ammunition loads. All of them made their drops, and all returned safely to Nicaragua. The drop zone was supposed to be the Girón airport, but many of the cargoes did not hit it—some pallets landed in the jungle, and others in the water. It was difficult to find the pallets in the jungle in the fading daylight and during the night, and most of those

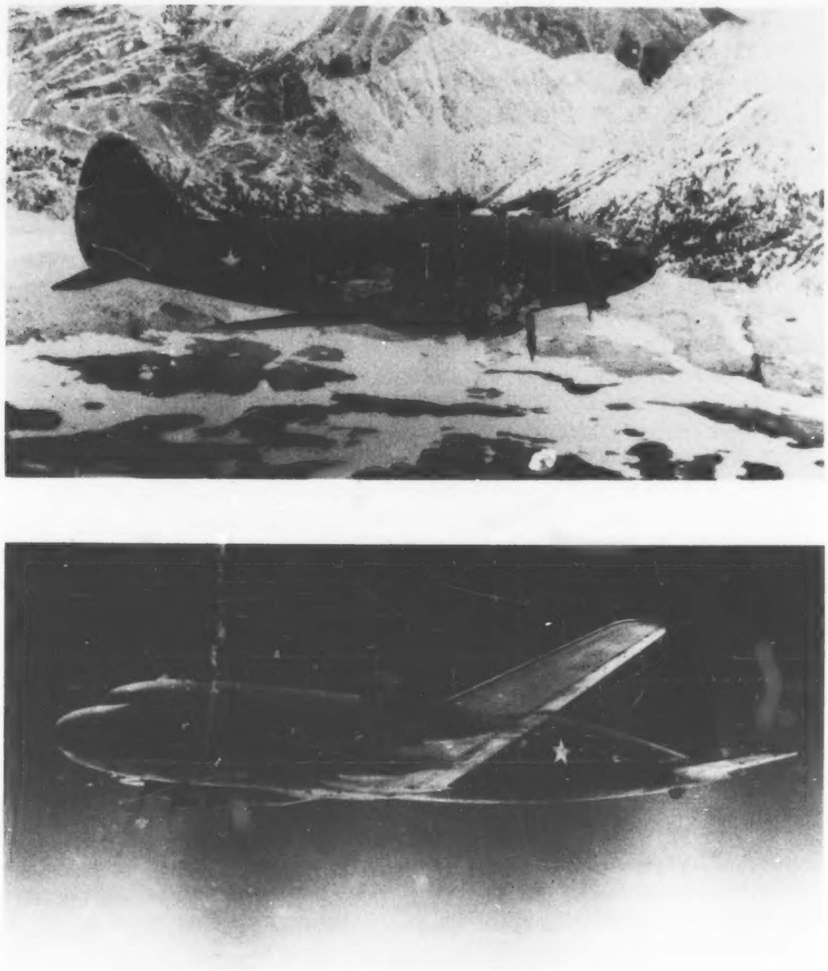

Figure 11. C-46 Commandos (above) and C-54 Skymasters were partially successful in their efforts to supply the airlift needed to replenish the CEF's munitions and airborne forces.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

that landed in the water were lost, though some were recovered in usable condition by Cuban exile frogmen.[32]

The Skymaster is hardly half the size of and flies the same speed of today's standard tactical aerial delivery plane, the C-130 Hercules. The C-46 has perhaps one-third the lifting capability of the later versions of the Hercules and hardly more than one-third their speed (fig. 11). Consequently, keeping a force of 1,400 troops supplied by an airlift fleet of (by then) 11 airplanes over 500 miles of open water was out of the question.[33]

The CIA and the US Navy were making strenuous attempts to cause the surviving García Line ships to return to the combat zone to bring in the required ammunition, but there was no chance at all of getting them back on the night of D-day or the subsequent morning. But neither sealift nor airlift troubles were really the root of the problem—the real difficulty was the lack of air superiority. With air superiority both the ships and the airplanes could have returned to the Cuban shore with impunity; without it the situation would only become more hopeless. The CIA people at Puerto Cabezas realized this, and they finally persuaded the President to reverse his decision once again and permit air raids on Castro's airfields. The outcome was dismal. Three B-26s departed Puerto Cabezas at 8:00 p.m. headed toward the San Antonio de los Baños base, which was correctly deemed to be the lair of the deadly T-33s. Two of the airplanes developed engine trouble before they reached Cuba and returned to Nicaragua without effect. Joaquin Varela, the leader of the flight, did make it to Cuba and wandered about in the dark for a time, but could not find the target and returned without expending his bombs. It might be assumed that in that day and age the idea of a light bomber pilot finding such a target in the dark was rather preposterous; but Varela was a native Cuban who presumably had flown around that base previously, which *could* have compensated for the primitive navigation and bomb-aiming equipment then in use. Some of the B-26s even tried "trolling" for the enemy by firing their rockets and turning on their landing lights. But Castro's antiaircraft gunners would not reveal their positions by opening fire. However, Varela reported that the clouds and the fog had prevented the acquisition of his target. The second flight of the night departed Nicaragua two hours later, at 10:00 p.m., and neither of its airplanes made it to the target.[34]

Defenders of Kennedy might point to Monday night's experience as proof that his cancellation of the D-day dawn raids really did not make any difference. Perhaps so. Certainly, in the dark it would have been easy enough to miss the targets even without the clouds; and, as we have seen, Castro's airplanes were already airborne and heading for the beaches when the sun came up. Yet, the exile crews on the morning of D-day would have been much fresher, there would have been more aircraft in the strike, and no one on the exile side would have been demoralized by the sinkings or the loss of friends in flight.

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D + 1

During the night between D-day and D + 1, as we have seen, five of the remaining B-26s flew yet another sortie over Castro's Cuba without much effect. It is clear the flights were flown during darkness, but it was daylight before they had returned to Puerto Cabezas for landings. Still, the force was able to generate a flight of six for D + 1 early afternoon takeoff to attack a vehicle convoy coming down on Red Beach from the north.[35] Notwithstanding the President's orders that no US personnel would take part in the combat in Cuba, even for this Tuesday flight (D + 1), two CIA employees were in B-26 cockpits. At the time, the world was none the wiser, for neither fell into Castro's hands. The formation arrived over the shore between Red and Blue Beaches at a time when the T-33s were nowhere in sight, and its members were able to make multiple passes in what probably was the bloodiest action of the invasion. According to Eduardo Ferrer, the Cubans later admitted that the mission had destroyed 30 vehicles (including some tanks) and imposed about 900 casualties on the Cuban militia.[36] None of the aircraft suffered any battle damage, and the mechanics at Puerto Cabezas had almost the whole night to get them ready for the flight on D + 2, Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the on-scene commander was not having much luck getting the García Line ships back to the battle zone soon enough to get the ammunition ashore during the hours of darkness on Tuesday night. The *Atlántico* did get back to the rendezvous area (50 miles offshore) just before dark, but could not get its goods transferred to the landing craft soon enough for them to get in and out before the dawn. The *Caribe* was still nowhere in sight, and the ammunition situation with the brigade was more desperate than ever.[37] Thus, if the brigade were to get any replenishment Tuesday night, it would have to come from the air, not from the sea.

The force at Nicaragua generated one more aerial delivery mission, this time for a flight of three C-54s. The tactics planned to avoid trouble with Castro's T-33s included a minimum altitude approach at 400 feet above the sea, a "pop up" to 800 feet crossing the beach, a quick drop at the Girón airport just behind the beach, and then a violent turn, beating a hasty retreat seaward. The time over target (TOT) was scheduled just after dark so that the brigade would have to wait no longer than necessary for its replenishment, yet the C-54s could hope to make it in and out without being spotted by any possible Cuban radar or visually by the T-33s. The three C-54s made their approaches sequentially, rather than in formation, and all of them managed to return to Nicaragua in one piece. Of course, the tactics used alerted the ground gunners in plenty of time to fire on the last two in the train; but though they made their drops in the presence of much ground fire, no real harm was suffered. A part of the load of the lead ship fell into the sea but the rest did impact in the vicinity of the designated DZ at the airport.[38] But that was really too little too late, for the entire flight could deliver only about as much as can one C-130.

Recall that the Cuban armed forces did not generate much of a ground response to the invasion until late afternoon on D-day. Once night had fallen, Castro's forces were swelling and were freed of the threat from the air. They began increasing the pressure on both the San Blas and the Playa Larga ends of the front. The consumption of ammunition by the exile troops who had never been in battle was very high, and the logistical support that had been planned to be put ashore during Monday night was either destroyed or scared off by Castro's air power. Thus, though the casualties suffered by the Cuban forces were much greater than those of the exiles on both fronts, the ammunition shortage caused the exiles later to contract their perimeter after daybreak on D + 1. Oliva deemed the situation so desperate on Red Beach during the early morning that he joined his force with that of Jose San Roman at Blue Beach with a march eastward along the coast road. Castro's militia followed at a respectful distance but was caught out in the open in midafternoon by the flight of six B-26s, described above. Later that same day, the pressure also got too high around San Blas and the troops there also fell back on Blue Beach, with the militia following at some distance. Of course, San Roman was relaying all this to the on-scene commander embarked in the *Blagar* who, presumably, was the one who was relaying it all back to Washington and Nicaragua.

Though there is not much indication that Nicaragua was not up-to-date, the Cuban Study Group did conclude that the information flow to the President was neither complete nor timely enough for the proper decisions to be made.[39] The Taylor Committee also complained that the problem was especially acute on the afternoon of D + 1. An attempt was made to overcome this problem when reconnaissance of the beaches by US Navy aircraft was authorized on Tuesday afternoon.[40] Later that afternoon, people on the beach thought they saw two "F-86 Sabre jets" without any markings go by and took that to mean that the desired direct help from the US armed forces was beginning to come.[41] It seems likely that these were not Sabres at all, for there were very few of those in the US armed forces by 1961; they were probably A-4s from the *Essex* on the reconnaissance mission required by Washington.

By Tuesday night, then, the crisis situation in Washington was reaching its climax. The aerial deliveries were but a tiny fraction of the requirement. The most desperate attempts of the on-scene commander to get a sealift to the beach going during the night were not succeeding. The crews were threatening to mutiny if a daylight sealift were ordered, and Washington was reluctant to force them to try one. The CEF air force had been roughly handled, though it got through Tuesday without further losses. The brigade commander was demanding succor in the strongest terms. The CIA and JCS, or at least Admiral Burke, were pressing the President for a decision to save the day with US air power. The Cubans were continuing to marshal additional combat power on the ground—and it was not apparent to us that their air power had been seriously depleted. Khrushchev was making threatening noises, and the United States was taking a beating in the forums of the United Nations and world public opinion. Still, the young President made it through a White House reception of Tuesday evening with reasonable grace and then joined a decision-making session after the party was over, around midnight.[42]

D + 2

At the night session, Kennedy's most militant advisers were asking that the A-4s embarked in the *Essex* be permitted to make a strike to destroy Castro's T-33s so as to permit the remaining CEF B-26s to swing the balance on the ground in favor of the exiles. The President, still determined to stick by his public vow not to permit US armed forces involvement on Cuban territory, resisted strongly. Finally, the most he would permit was that a half dozen A-4s from the *Essex* be launched for a one-hour combat air patrol over the beachhead from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. on D + 2 (Wednesday, 19 April). The mission was to protect the B-26s from Puerto Cabezas against the T-33s, not to destroy the latter nor any other Cuban targets. The rules of engagement were clear. The Navy was strictly forbidden to strike any ground targets and to initiate air-to-air combat: It would be permitted only to fire against T-33s that were attempting to attack the friendly B-26s.[43] Castro's forces had instructions not to engage any US units. On Monday, for example, the T-33s had been attacking one of the CEF B-26s over the beach. The latter fled seaward and the Cuban pilots were closing for the kill when two "aviones reacivos norteamericanos (US jets)" (apparently A-4s from the *Essex* operating over international waters) interposed themselves between the Cubans and their intended victim. That caused Castro's pilots to break off the attack and leave the scene; perhaps they would have acted the same way on Wednesday morning in a similar situation.[44]

Everything that was tried on D + 2 was really only a forlorn hope. If there had been any chance at all of salvaging anything after the events of D-day, it depended upon getting the munitions on board the *Atlántico* to Blue Beach before daybreak D + 2. Thus, the President's decision to use the Skyhawks from the *Essex* to cover the B-26s raiding the shore, and the decision to try one more B-26 attack, could not have made any real difference in the final outcome—even had both efforts been remarkable successes.

The first two-ship element of the B-26 attack was already airborne when the news came through to Puerto Cabezas that the US Navy would provide air cover for the attack. Those two aircraft made their penetration and tore up a Cuban column and claimed to have destroyed three tanks, three other vehicles, and a number of Castro's soldiers. Both got away before the T-33s arrived, though one had 37 bullet holes (all from the small arms of Castro's infantry) when it got back to the base in Nicaragua.[45]

As the first element was outbound, from the target, it spoke with the second, which took off at 4:30 a.m. and which *did* have the word on Kennedy's decision to provide air cover. All the pilots in the second element were American employees of the CIA, for there were not enough ready and willing Cuban exiles left to fill all the seats of the force. The leader of the inbound element, Riley Shamburger, Jr, asked the others whether they had seen any of the Navy aircraft that were supposed to be overhead. The first element had not. No sooner had Shamburger and his colleagues arrived over Girón than they were "jumped" by two T-33s that had been launched at dawn from the base at San Antonio de los Baños. Shamburger was hit immediately and crashed into the sea just off Girón. There were no survivors. The second ship of that element was shot down, also by a T-33, near the sugar mill at Central Australia a few miles north of Red Beach. It, too, was crewed by two Americans and neither survived. Castro made much of this latter victory, for it gave him the bodies to substantiate his claims that the "Norteamericanos" were still the imperialist threat of old, and that they could be beaten[46] (if only the people of Cuba and the rest of the third world would believe in Fidel).

Even during these last gasps, Castro had more than his share of good fortune. The Navy A-4s were nowhere in sight; and we may assume that if they had been, given the orders they had from the President, they would have jumped into the fight with some enthusiam—and it seems likely that, once engaged, the six of them might very well have taken out both the T-33s. What happened? There seems to be little doubt that the *Essex* launched her "birds" on the schedule advertised by Washington and they were indeed overhead between 6:30 and 7:30 a.m., Cuban time. Arthur Schlesinger asserts that the difficulty came from a mistake in the calculation of time zone differences between Nicaragua and Cuba.[47] Eduardo Ferrer's firsthand description of the forlorn final debriefing at Puerto Cabezas confirms this and implies that the mistake was there in Nicaragua and not in Washington nor on the *Essex*.[48]

The T-33 pilots were welcomed back to San Antonio de los Baños with jubilation, and Rafael del Pino seemed disposed to start the victory celebration on the spot—but an older hand, his chief pilot Enrique Carreras, who had himself shot down one of the B-26s, restrained that tendency for the moment, arguing that the "Pentagon" might have some more to say.[49] Neither man realized how close Carreras himself had been to receiving that message from the Pentagon over the beaches through the instruments of some Navy Skyhawks—only another of those famous "snafus" being between him and a fight much more equal than that put up by his victims.

The rest is anticlimax: exhilaration for the Castro Cubans; dejection for the exiles and their American allies. Rafael del Pino flew two more air-to-surface missions that afternoon, both of them perfect expressions of that mood. The first was flown against many small boats plying between an American destroyer standing off Girón and the beach. The T-33 pilots were amazed that they were able to make repeated runs on those boats and the destroyer never opened fire on them; it was only later that they realized the ship was involved in evacuation, not making a new landing. Later, they launched against ground targets around the Girón airport and village, but the exile perimeter was by then so contracted that they couldn't do much shooting. At that point, the Cuban air force suspended its operations, for the militia no longer needed its help.[50]

For the exile pilots at the airfield at Puerto Cabezas the war was whimpering to an end. A sense of betrayal seemed to pervade the final pilots' meeting. The C-54s and C-46s, which had been forlornly searching the sea for two of their comrades who had gone down on Monday in a B-26, gave them up after two days. The last flight for this little air force seemed all too appropriate for the way things had gone: a C-46 was dispatched on Thursday with 15 million leaflets calling upon all true Cubans to rise up and join the exiles in the effort to rid Cuba of her oppressor. The Commando plodded out to sea and dropped them all into the briney deep.[51]

Seven B-26s of the Cuban Expeditionary Force's air arm were shot down, and five others left the action through forced landings and the like. One C-46 was lost during the fighting, having gone down offshore for causes not fully established. Ten Cuban exile B-26 crew members died, as did the crew of the C-46. Four Americans, all B-26 crew members, were killed.

The Cuban air force lost five airplanes on the ground during the bombings of D − 2, and four more, all to antiaircraft artillery fire, on D-day. Rafael del Pino names six of his compatriots who gave their lives to fight off the exiles and adds tributes to "such others who offered their lives in defense of the Revolution."[52] Since the two Sea Furies and two B-26s Castro's force lost on Monday themselves carried six pilots, there had to be at least that many casualties (all crashed at sea). The overall figures published since the Bay of Pigs invasion by the Cubans greatly understate the overall losses, and a part of the understatement *may* have included some casualties for the air force. As the principal targets of the bombings on D − 2 were air force bases, that does seem a real possibility.

The strategic effect for Cuba was that Castro was made more secure than ever as that country's dictator, and the Soviets gained a toehold into the Western Hemisphere through their support. The US hegemony over the Caribbean was clearly diminished, though not ended. Inside the United States, justly or unjustly, the JCS lost some of their stature, as did the CIA. This, combined with the fact that Kennedy hired Gen Maxwell Taylor to conduct the inquiry into the failure, may have been a step further away from the massive retaliation strategy of the Eisenhower administration, and one toward a flexible response strategy—which was General Taylor's theme. Rather an impressive week's work for a couple of T-33s!

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NOTES

CHAPTER 4

1. Peter Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 70–71.

2. Ibid.

3. Memorandum 1, a part of the postcrisis investigation report done by a committee headed by Gen Maxwell D. Taylor and aided by Robert Kennedy, Arleigh Burke, and Allen Dulles. Only one copy of the report was made and it was composed of a cover letter and four memoranda. A sanitized version was recently declassified and released; the one on which this study is based was acquired from the archives of the library of the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C., Subject: Cuban Study Group, 13 June 1961. Hereafter cited as "Taylor Committee 1."

4. Charles J. V. Murphy, "Cuba: The Record Set Straight," *Fortune* (September 1961): 26–28; "Official Inside Story of the Cuba Invasion," *US News & World Report* (13 August 1979), 80.

5. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 170, asserts that this raid was to have been larger, but that when Kennedy called Bissell with permission to fly the raid he rather casually asked its size and Bissell told him it was to be 16 airplanes. On the spot, Kennedy told him that was too many and to reduce it, but did not specify the number that would be permissible. Thereupon, according to Wyden, Bissell arbitrarily cut it down to 6. Wyden, a journalist with a good bit of experience as a magazine editor, has produced the most recent work on the Bay of Pigs, and it is generally reliable; but he disagrees with all the other sources on this point—and he does not give the documentation for the transaction between Bissell and the President. None of the other sources refer to this last minute reduction, and all of them say that the size of the attacking force was eight B-26s. Eduardo Ferrer, in *Operacion Puma* (Miami, Fla.: International Aviation Consultants, 1975), 152, 160–65, indicates that the attack was done by two "escuadrillas" and one "elemento" of B-26s. The former were flights of three ships and the latter an element of two, for a total of eight. Ferrer, himself a pilot in the Cuban Expeditionary Force's (CEF) air force, was at the base at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, at the time and his testimony would seem decisive on that point.

6. There has been some grumbling in the literature that there had been some strikes planned for D − 1 (Sunday, 16 April) too, but that they were canceled by Washington at the last minute. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 168. Confirmation will await further declassifications, but the Taylor Committee, which did a fairly thorough job of describing events in its memoranda, which were highly classified until the late seventies, makes no mention of any intent to make a raid on D − 1.

7. David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, in *The Invisible Government* (New York: Random House, 1964), 39–40, state the distance was around 500 miles, one way.

8. One such source is Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 293.

9. Taylor Committee 1, 20.

10. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 156, recalled many years later that the intelligence photographs shown to the pilots at Puerto Cabezas before the mission showed that Castro had five B-26s at San Antonio de los Baños and one more at Santiago de Cuba, for a total of six. He had three T-33s at the former base and one over at Santiago. Santiago de Cuba had two Sea Furies and there were three more at San Antonio de los

Baños, for a total of five. There were also two P-47s and one F-51, but they never did figure in the fighting, probably because they were not flyable. Most likely, Ferrer was talking about airplanes that appeared to be flyable, for most sources place the totals higher than he does:

B-26s	6
T-33s	4
Sea Furies	5
Others	7 (C-47s, Catalinas, and the like)
Total	22

11. Pedro Miguel Escalona, "Story of an Invasion Thwarted," *Granma Weekly* ("Granma" was the name of the boat that brought Castro and his compatriots back to Cuba after their exile and prior to the fall of Batista) (Havana), 19 April 1981, 7–8; Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, 20, 39; L. Fletcher Prouty, *The Secret Team: The CIA and its Allies in Control of the United States and the World* (Englewood Cliffs: Princeton-Hall, 1973), 49; Taylor Committee 1, 15.

12. Escalona, "Invasion Thwarted," 8.

13. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 157–60.

14. Ibid., 157.

15. Ibid., 160–69. Ferrer claims that after the raid, Castro had remaining but two T-33s, four Sea Furies, and two B-26s in flyable condition. That accounting is probably not too far off the mark. Taylor Committee 1, 15, says that five aircraft were destroyed but makes no mention of the ones remaining. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 181–84; Rafael del Pino, of Castro's air force, in *Amanecer en Giron* (Havana, Cuba: Institutio del Libro, 1969), 87, says that two T-33s were destroyed on the 15th but makes no mention of the number remaining in operation on Monday, D-day.

16. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 185.

17. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 17.

18. Ibid., 173.

19. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 197–200; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 272–73; Taylor Committee 1, 17–18.

20. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 186.

21. Taylor Committee 1, 17–18; "Official Inside Story of the Cuban Invasion," *US News & World Report*, 13 August 1979, 80.

22. Taylor Committee 1, 17.

23. Escalona, "Invasion Thwarted," 8.

24. Wyden in *The Untold Story*, 228–29, states that the failure of the rocket to detonate is only one of many indications that the CIA intelligence on the condition of the Castro armed forces was not really too far off the mark. Rafael del Pino in *Amanecer en Giron*, 70 (he flew his first T-33 combat mission on midday, Monday) complained that flying his aircraft was like playing Russian roulette and admits that the rockets under his wings for that sortie were the last available for the T-33s.

25. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 228–29.

26. Taylor Committee 1, 18–21; Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, 57–61.

27. Haynes Johnson, *The Bay of Pigs: The Leaders' Story of Brigade* 2506 (New York: Norton, 1964), 125. The exiles imprisoned by Castro after their capture were released in December 1963; this book is largely based on interviews with them.

28. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 228; Rafael del Pino, *Amanecer en Giron*, describes the destruction of a CEF B-26 from Castro's side of things, 78, 90–92.

29. For a fuller discussion, see Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 12; Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 231; Rafael del Pino, *Amanecer en Giron*, 78-79 (for a T-33 pilot's view of the *Blagar* shooting down a Cuban B-26); and Taylor Committee 1, 21. The Cuban Study Group says that four friendly B-26s were lost over the beaches that day, but the report leaves out comment about one damaged and landed at Key West for repairs and fuel, and one that was damaged and landed at a British field in the Grand Cayman Islands—making six out of action as a result of the D-day fighting.

30. Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 232–33; Taylor Committee 1, 19–21; Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 182–85; Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 114.

31. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 195–203.

32. Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 148–49. Taylor Committee 1, 58, claims that five of the drops were successful, and one drifted into the sea; but the recollection of the exiles as presented in the Johnson book were not that enthusiastic.

33. The 5,000 man garrison at Khe Sanh a little more than six years later was resupplied from the air for quite some time, but C-130s were used that had a major logistics base hardly 60 miles away at Da Nang, and a much larger force of airplanes was available. Even at that, they would typically fly only two sorties a day up to Khe Sanh, and they did all their airdrops in daylight. Further, the C-130s had the assistance of a radar set at the receiving base that helped them make accurate drops in inclement weather. It is true that the antiaircraft opposition was much more fierce at Khe Sanh than it was around the Girón airport, but there was no air-to-air threat at all against the C-130s resupplying the Marines in 1967-68. Moreover, the Marines had truly massive close air support; the CEF did not.

34. Remember that most of the crew members involved in the night's raids had also flown missions to Cuba that very morning and that the earlier flights had been around eight hours' duration—in a cockpit with no chance of any real rest even in level flight over open water. Further, they were members of a rather tightly knit unit that had been decimated that very morning and that had suffered losses only two days earlier. Now a second eight-hour flight was imposed on them without even a pretense at crew rest in between the two, and it may be more remarkable that they did not destroy their airplanes in accidents than it was that they did not find the targets. For descriptions of the raids, see Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, 63; Taylor Committee 1, 21; Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 1366; and Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 207, who reported that a general blackout around the base caused the failure. Ferrer also asserted that the mission was flown somewhat later than is indicated in the text, but his book was written many years after these events.

35. The CEF started their operation with 16 B-26s. Four were taken out of the war by various events on Saturday, leaving 12. Four others were shot down and 2 more made forced landings on Monday, leaving just 6 in the force. Eight additional B-26s were ordered to Nicaragua during the operation, but it seems that some of them did not arrive in time. Five aircraft flew again on Monday night (out of an apparent remainder of 6) and none were then lost. All 6 were involved in the attack south of Red Beach on Tuesday afternoon, and all returned unharmed. A flight of 6 was again launched on Wednesday morning, but 2 of those were shot down and 4 came back. Yet, Eduardo Ferrer says that there were 7 on the ramp at Puerto Cabezas at the end of the operation, which means that at least 3 of those inbound from the United States must have already arrived, *Operacion Puma*, 217. But his figures may not be accurate, for he wrote long after the event. On the surface of things, it appears that the force must have been supported by a first-class maintenance outfit to have produced that many sorties with such short turnarounds in an austere environment with so few airplanes—old ones at that.

36. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 209; Taylor Committee 1, 23, says that seven tanks were destroyed and the estimated casualties amounted to 1,800 people; see also Wyden, *The Untold Story*, 236.

37. Taylor Committee 1, 23.

38. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 209–10.

39. Taylor Committee 1, 23.

40. Ibid., 28.

41. Johnson, *Bay of Pigs*, 147.

42. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 278.

43. Adm Robert Lee Dennison, US Navy (Ret.), "As I Recall," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 105 (October 1979): 113; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 278.

44. Rafael del Pino, *Amanecer en Giron*, 91.

45. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 214.

46. In *Amanecer en Giron*, 108–9, del Pino says that he himself did not fly in the element that got both the B-26s on D + 2, but he was present at the briefing and debriefing of the pilots who did. Though he claims that Castro's air force still had a Sea Fury operational, both the B-26s were shot down by the T-33s. Later that same day, the Cuban air force was also to get an exceedingly shaky B-26 airborne, but it suffered a fire only a short time after takeoff and came right back in to San Antonio de los Baños. Ferrer, a transport pilot, did not fly in the B-26 mission on the other side that day, but he was present at the briefings in Nicaragua, *Operacion Puma*, 213–15. Wyden, in *The Untold Story*, reprints the bloody pictures of the corpses of Thomas Ray and Leo Baker that were taken by Castro after they had been shot down.

47. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 278.
48. Ferrer, *Operacion Puma*, 215.
49. Rafael del Pino, *Amanecer en Giron*, 108.
50. Ibid., 109–13.
51. Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, 73.
52. Rafael del Pino, *Amanecer en Giron*, 125.

CHAPTER 5

THE YOM KIPPUR WAR: COMPLEX CRISIS

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 generated a complex crisis interaction that involved both superpowers and a number of other international actors. In this crisis, the United States used its land-based aircraft to signal, support, deter, and modify behavior. Land-based aircraft sent a clear signal at the outset of the crisis when the United States first withheld and then provided airlift support and fighter aircraft to Israel. When the Soviets took steps leading to the possible deployment of their forces, the United States altered the alert status of all its forces and redeployed some B-52 aircraft to deter further Soviet action and to modify ongoing Soviet and Israeli activity. Likewise, the Soviets, in addition to their threat to airlift combat forces, used their land-based aircraft to signal interest, commitment, and support by airlifting new supplies of surface-to-air-missiles (SAMs) to replenish their clients' air defense system.

GENESIS OF THE CRISIS

The genesis of the Yom Kippur War need not detain us long. The story began in the Old Testament and was revised in modern times when the United Nations (UN) partitioned Palestine and the Jewish state was proclaimed in the aftermath of World War II. That state was a living outrage to the Arabs, and Israel began its existence with a military struggle for survival. The Israelis won the first round at the end of 1948, but their adversaries remained committed to their extinction. In 1956, taking advantage of a world crisis arising from Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal, Israel joined in a war with France and the United Kingdom against Egypt. They were successful against the Arabs in a military sense, but in a rare moment of superpower unity in that cold-war era, the United States and the Soviet Union joined Egypt to make the attackers disgorge their gains. Momentarily, the American action raised her esteem among the Arabs, but that feeling soon passed. It did not matter much, for in those days the United States was still self-sufficient in energy. All through the ensuing decade, the Arab world vowed to destroy Israel and

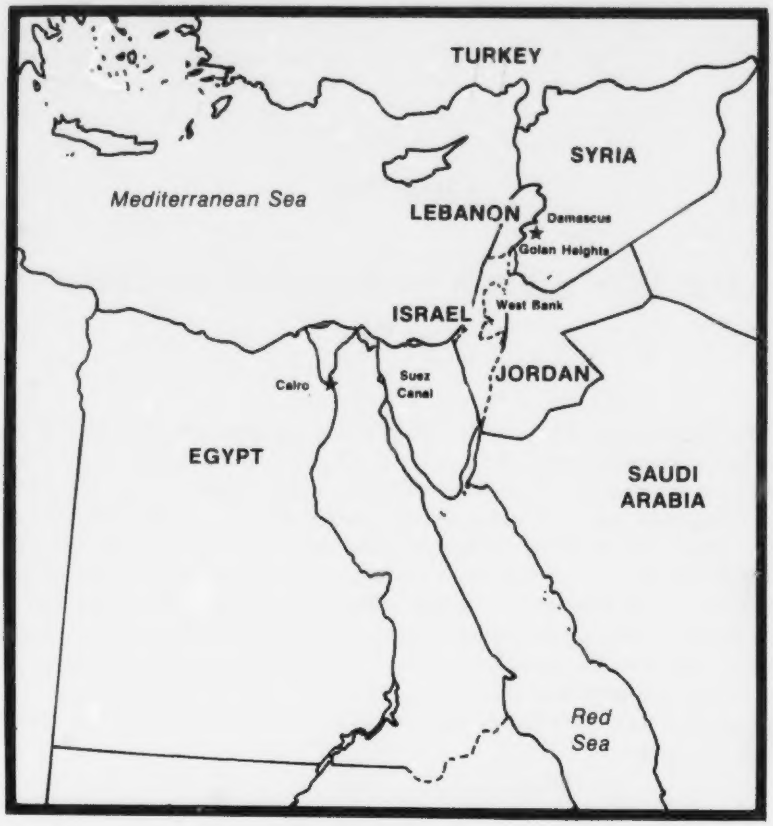
TURKEY
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
LEBANON
Damascus
Golan Heights
ISRAEL
West Bank
Cairo
Suez Canal
JORDAN
EGYPT
SAUDI ARABIA
Red Sea

Figure 12. The Sinai Desert and Suez Canal.

return the promised land to the Palestinians, the rightful owners (according to Islamic lights). In 1967, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser made some moves that were interpreted as threatening by the Israelis, who took the opportunity to launch one of the most devastating preemptive air attacks in the history of military aviation. In a stroke, the Egyptian air force was decimated, leaving the way open for the Jewish air-armor team to have a walk-through. Before the world had gathered enough steam to impose a cease-fire on the rampaging Israeli Defense Force (IDF), the Israelis had conquered the entire Sinai all the way down to the Suez Canal, ejected the Jordanians from the West Bank of the Jordan River (which was holy terrain to three of the world's great religions), and captured the Golan Heights, which dominated both the Damascus plain to the east and the northern regions of Israel to the west (fig. 12). The Arabs had been utterly humiliated, and until that situation could be changed there would be no peace.[1]

The outcome of the 1967 war, most often called the Six-Day War, was not conducive to peace in many ways. Of course, because of their smashing victory, the Israelis had to guard against complacency. Enjoying new security because of the buffers gained in the north, east, and south, the Jews were little disposed to make compromises for the sake of any paper guarantees that might be extracted from the Arabs. The superpowers' preoccupation with Vietnam and the rest of Asia, along with the coming of détente, reduced the competitiveness of the cold-war days and caused both to neglect their Middle East policies. The new dependency of the United States and the continued dependency of Europe and Japan on imported oil made them more interested in stability than in the restoration of Arab lands. Throughout the six years after 1967, the USSR supplied arms and diplomatic support to several of the most radical Arab states, but she was very careful in doing so. Though willing to try and make gains for communism whenever possible, the USSR would not risk either détente or peace for the sake of her Middle East policy. The result was a status quo that only deepened Arab bitterness, and the passage of time could only improve Israel's claim to the so-called "occupied territories."

For a time, President Nasser tried to get things off dead center with his "war of attrition." The Egyptians opened with more or less steady artillery fire that caused a constant drain of Jewish lives and money. Israel retaliated with her air force, first with attacks along the west bank of Suez, and later with deep penetration raids into the interior of Egypt. As Nasser was trying to get the Soviets more deeply involved in the Middle East, this Israeli response played into his hands. In the spring of 1970, he managed to talk the Soviets into providing him with an updated air defense missile system, and even with Soviet combat pilots. The Israeli Air Force (IAF), not wishing to kill Soviets, discontinued the raids into the interior, and the Egyptians continued the bombardment along the Suez Canal while further building up the air defense system. Finally, through the good offices of the United States, a cease-fire was negotiated that summer. But the Arabs, with the help of the USSR, immediately violated it to move the missile belt right up to the canal. Meanwhile, the cease-fire and some other moves were seen by the Palestinian refugees in Jordan as the first steps toward a betrayal of their interests. They undertook to prevent that betrayal with a campaign of terror that provoked King Ibn Talaz Hussein into a bloody repression. About this time, in September 1970, Nasser died and the Arab world was in a bit of disarray.[2]

Anwar Sadat inherited a multitude of problems from his predecessor and brought some of his own to the job. The Egyptian economy was in bad shape, the Soviet arms deliveries had been unsatisfying, and Nasser's bluster had brought forth charges from the rest of the Arab world that Egypt was a "paper tiger." Sadat, a long-time protégé of Nasser and a professional army officer, did not share the personal charisma that his patron had possessed. He was a moderate, and there was a good deal of dissatisfaction among the radical elements of the Egyptian elite about his succession. Sadat drew back from some of the most radical economic measures of the previous regime and restored some private property to its owners. He repressed domestic Communists, purged his political opponents, and cooperated in the defeat of a Communist coup in neighboring Sudan. All of this distressed his domestic adversaries mightily, but did not drive off the Soviets. Falling back on the doctrines of Lenin, they found it quite possible to cooperate with governments in the Middle East who brutally repressed their domestic Communists but who were anti-imperialist which, the Soviets thought, would weaken the common enemy: the capitalist West. Still, the Soviets' support of Sadat was measured, for they wanted to polish their image in the Arab world without permitting the situation to reach the stage of war fighting.

Anwar Sadat, though harboring a resentment of the arrogant Soviets, maintained a continual pressure for additional arms of greater sophistication and more offensive nature in the hopes of acquiring the power to move the Israelis (and their supporting Americans) away from their satisfaction with the status quo. He first tried to achieve his ends by diplomacy. Sadat announced that he would be willing to negotiate a peace settlement with the Israeli state and open the Suez waterway—provided that the Israelis first evacuate all the territory they had occupied in 1967. This willingness to negotiate was something the Israelis had sought for a long time, something that was highly divisive of the Arab world, something for which the most intransigent states roundly condemned Sadat. All this did not bring forth any more cooperation from the Israelis, and Sadat decided that he would have to go to war to unhinge the status quo and force negotiations.[3]

Sadat had called 1971 "the year of decision." When it came and went without a decision by either diplomacy or war his credibility was weakened among his Arab friends, while his adversaries wrote off the boast as a Nasser-like bombast. The Soviets had supplied Egypt with an air defense system based upon the SA-2 before Nasser died, but the United States effectively countered by sending the electronic countermeasures (ECM) equipment developed against that weapon in Vietnam to the IAF. During the spring of 1970, the Soviets brought in the SA-3, which could cover altitudes lower than those in the lethal range of the SA-2, making things much more difficult for the IAF. Air defense MiG-21s complete with Soviet combat pilots were also brought in at that time, but they were kept well back from the canal in defense of the Egyptian heartland. Similarly, the Egyptians kept pressing for offensive-type equipment for their ground forces, but the Soviets delivered mostly defensive arms and tried to extract commitments from the Arabs that they would not be used in combat without explicit permission from the Soviets.[4]

In May 1972, when President Richard Nixon traveled to Moscow to sign the first strategic arms limitation (SALT I) treaty, it was hailed as the beginning of an era of peace and good feeling, an era of détente, by most of the world, but it was a bad thing from the Egyptian point of view. It seemed to signify that détente was more important to the USSR than was the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Further, as long as Sadat maintained the Soviet connection, it would limit the support he could expect to get from the conservative Arab monarchies—who happened also to be the oil-rich ones. Similarly, the only power in the world with a real lever on Israeli policy was the United States, and she could not be expected to use it to bend the Israeli will as long as Egypt and the USSR remained so close. Thus, Sadat ejected most of the Soviet military advisers from Egyptian soil in July 1972.[5] He claims in his autobiography that he did so because he could not fight a war with them on his turf. At about the same time, he directed his military to prepare for war right after the November 1972 elections were held in the United States.[6]

Sadat was hoping that the ejection of the Soviets would stimulate some sort of diplomatic initiative in the United States, but nothing much happened. It was easy for Americans and Israelis to perceive the whole episode as a vindication of a hard-line policy.[7] Sadat claims that he did not go to war in the fall of 1972 because of incompetence among some of his military leaders—whom he fired and replaced with people who *would* make coherent plans for war in 1973.[8] The Soviets started supplying arms again in October 1972. By spring the flow had become much more generous than theretofore. Anwar Sadat probably claims more than he should for his deception plan—the ejection of the Soviets was supposedly done partly for its value in lulling the adversary into complacency. President Sadat knew, too, that he had no chance of eradicating the Israeli state—1967 had proven that. His objective was much more limited than that which had so long been an article of faith of the Arab world: he wanted to grab only a small piece of territory on the east bank of Suez to jolt the diplomatic process into proceedings that would end with the return of the occupied territories to the Arabs, not to eliminate Israel, nor even to restore the "rights" of the Palestinians.[9] In fact, the adoption of that relatively limited objective was probably an element in the success of the deception plan. The Israelis had been living so long with the threat to their survival that it was easy for them to assume that annihilation was still the goal of the Arabs. The Israelis knew annihilation was still well beyond the competence of the Arab enemies and, consequently, even the most rabid Arab nationalist could not aspire to start a war for that purpose.[10] This assumption conditioned the minds of Israeli intelligence people to accept the argument that visible Egyptian military preparations were only more training—or bluster at the worst.

The Egyptians still were not ready, then, to conquer the IDF in a protracted contest. The strategy was merely to surprise the adversary, gain some limited ground on the far side of the Suez Canal before the Israeli reserves could be mobilized, agree to an early cease-fire that would be imposed by the superpowers determined to repress war in the Middle East, and then negotiate from an improved strategic position with a restored combat reputation. Sadat's military staffs told him that there were three possible periods for an attack before the snows on the Golan Heights would become a threat to the success of the Syrian part of the attack: May, late August, and early October.[11] Though a military buildup along the canal was undertaken in May that stimulated a mobilization in Israel, President Sadat decided to delay the attack until fall because of the impending Brezhnev-Nixon meeting of June 1973. This delay added to the deception, because the May mobilization cost over $10 million and had been decided upon by the political leaders in the face of the intelligence estimate that the attack would not come. The leaders' decision further lulled the Israelis and conditioned their minds to accept a similar prediction from intelligence in the first week of October.[12] The American intelligence community had agreed with the Israelis in May, and it agreed again in October. Why should they doubt it? The Israeli system had a splendid record for timeliness and accuracy, and it had sources that the Americans did not enjoy.[13] So it happened that, in spite of an obvious Arab buildup and such other warning signs as the evacuation of Soviet dependents from Egypt, the Israelis (and the United States) *were* surprised—it was not until about four in the morning on Saturday, 6 October

1973, that Golda Meir received a call from her intelligence people stating that they were convinced that the attack would come around 1800 that very day![14]

As it happened, even with this late notification, the intelligence estimate was still wrong by four hours—a vital four hours, it turned out. The initial Egyptian and Syrian air and artillery assaults began at 1405. The entire IDF defense plan was predicated on the notion that the intelligence system would guarantee 48 hours' advance notice of any attack. Thus, standing forces were set up that could delay any attack for a short time while the final stages of mobilization were completed and the Israelis could go over to the counteroffensive. The IDF's mobilization scheme was a marvel in that it could bring the greater part of its forces into line within 48 hours and all of them to combat-ready status within 72 hours—but only 14 hours' warning was given, and even then it turned out to be 4 hours on the short side so that only 10 hours of preparation was allowed. Some of the lower units in the Sinai had not been informed when the shooting started, and the tanks that were to have laced the stationary defenses there were nowhere in sight.[15]

Fortunately the IAF was fully alerted for other reasons (it had gotten into a squabble with the Syrian air force a few weeks earlier and had shot down 13 aircraft against a loss of one and was expecting some sort of retaliation), and the Israeli navy, using its own intelligence, had come to a fully alerted state. The IAF is almost wholly a regular force so that in an alerted state it is near its full combat potential even without mobilization. Moshe Dayan, then minister of defense, met with the chief of staff of the IDF, Gen David Elazar, at 0550. They disagreed on the immediate response to the impending Arab threat. Dayan wanted only a partial, defensive mobilization and was strictly against any preemptive strike. He was, of course, thinking of the political factors and the importance of not appearing to be the aggressor in the eyes of world opinion. Dayan and the rest of the cabinet had been warned long before against preemption by Henry Kissinger, the American secretary of state. The Israelis knew that the leverage the Arabs had gained because of the growing energy dependence of the West made it all the more important that Israel do nothing to damage her already-weakened diplomatic situation, especially with the United States. This was particularly important given the fact that the Arabs had achieved surprise, and the prospect of a short war had been diminished. The chances were greater now that the struggle would be prolonged and that replenishment from the outside was likely to be a decisive factor.

General Elazar, on the other hand, remembered well the great successes the IDF had enjoyed because of preemption in 1967 and knew that the IAF was the only part of the defense force that was fully mobilized. He was sure the IAF could deliver a massive preemptive strike before noon and that this would buy time for the ground forces to mobilize. It is clear, though, that the passive and active defenses of Egypt were now far better than they had been in 1967. Most of their aircraft were well protected in shelters in 1973; moreover, the new missile defenses would have imposed a high toll on any preemptive attack. But Elazar argued that the defensive mobilization would only delay the time when the IDF could go over to the counteroffensive and would entail serious risks in terms of the length of the war and the new Israeli position in the negotiations that would follow.[16]

Dayan and Elazar took the case to Golda Meir early that morning, and she decided against the preemptive strike and for an immediate mobilization. Her reasoning in the first case was similar to that of Dayan, and the idea of a defensive mobilization only was also based on the notion that Israel had to avoid any appearance of aggression in the eyes of the United States.[17] Elazar went back to the IDF and ordered the full mobilization notwithstanding his orders; it really did not make much difference in the end because events moved so rapidly that everyone concerned was immediately trying to generate the maximum combat power possible at the earliest moment possible.

The situation at midday on 6 October 1973 was that the Egyptians and Syrians were on the point of attacking; the Israelis knew it, but thought that the crossing of the lines would come several hours later than turned out to be the case. The IAF and the Israeli navy were fully alerted and nearly completely mobilized. The ground forces in the north were fully alerted and had received some reinforcements in the preceding week or so. Mobilization had been ordered, but had started so late that the full combat power of the IDF was not expected to be developed until very late Sunday or early Monday.

The United States was by now aware that the attack was coming, but had a misperception of its timing. President Nixon was in Florida. Secretary of State Kissinger was in Boston the previous day, but quickly returned to Washington. Both men were fully aware of the dependency of the West on Middle East oil, even though the Arabs had not yet fully tested that weapon or brought that awareness to the general public. Israeli Ambassador Simcha Dinitz, who was in Israel for Yom Kippur, had already been sent packing back to the United States where he had close connections with a group of congressmen and senators with great sympathy for Israel and great power in Washington.

The Soviets, who were quite aware that the attack was coming, had evacuated their citizens from Egypt on the previous day. Their goals seemed to be (1) to avoid a confrontation with the United States, (2) to preserve détente, and (3) to preserve and improve their standing in the Arab world.[18] They had tried to dissuade the Arabs from attempting to settle accounts by force, but assured their clients that all due support, except the commitment of combat troops, would be forthcoming. Apparently, the Soviets did not have much confidence in Arab military prowess and were striving for an early cease-fire from the outset.[19]

The Syrians hoped to regain the crest of the Golan Heights through a sudden thrust and then hang on to their gains by means of a cease-fire that would be imposed before the Israeli mobilization had progressed to where the IDF could mount a counteroffensive. The Egyptians were well trained, had a good plan, and were determined to grab a chunk of the east bank of the Suez Canal, go over to a defensive configuration under their air-defense missile umbrella, and await the Israeli counterattack that would result in the bleeding of the IDF beyond its tolerance. This, they hoped, would result in negotiations that would restore to them the Sinai and to their Arab brothers the other lands the Israelis had won in the 1967 war.

THE ARABS ATTACK

The Egyptians had what was doubtless their finest hour of all the Arab-Israeli wars at the outset of the October 1973 campaign. Precisely coordinated with the Syrian attack in the north, the Egyptians began their air strikes and artillery barrages just after 1400. Contrary to many speculations in the journals right after the war, the time was not chosen as a compromise between the sunrise attack desired by the Syrians and the sunset attack advocated by the Egyptians—suggesting that since both could not have the sun at their backs, they chose a time so that neither would have it. Rather, it was chosen so that the Arabs would have a few hours of daylight with which to execute their penetrations and crossings, but the time available for the IAF to mount a counterattack would be limited.

Immediately after the initial barrages opened, the ground forces commenced crossing the canal in rubber boats. Within about seven hours the engineers had washed gaps in the sand ramparts on the east side of the canal with high-pressure streams of water, laid 10 bridges, and established many ferries. They got across fairly easily, not only because the IDF had misestimated the time of the attack, but also because Gen Shmuel Gonen, in command on the southern front, held back the movement of his tanks toward their ramps among the fixed fortifications at the canal until the very last minute. He later claimed that he did this to protect the crews from needless exposure to artillery fire, but Nadav Safran and others speculate that he and David Elazar did not want to prematurely alert the Egyptians to the fact that the Israelis knew what was going on. The Israelis, it is alleged, feared that would scare the Egyptians into calling off the attack and depriving the IDF of a chance to administer another humiliating lesson to the Arab armed forces.[20] The delay, combined with the mistake on the time of the attack, meant that the tanks were not there to support the fortifications during the crossing. The Egyptians were able to make the trip between the strong points with amazingly few casualties and to install themselves and their light antitank weapons on the tank ramps and in the terrain beyond. When Gonen's armor finally did show up, it was ambushed and driven back, leaving all the manned fortifications to their own devices. All of the latter except one fell before the fighting was over.

The Egyptians had advanced on a very broad front and halted their movement when they had reached a line about five miles to the east of the canal, well under the protection of the fixed missile defenses still emplaced on the west bank. The wide advance was intended to dilute the impact of the IAF, and it did. The halt was intended to cause the IAF to bleed itself against the missile defenses and the ground counterattack to bleed itself against the Egyptians in prepared defensive positions, and it did. The planning and execution of the initial assault in the south were very well done; and had the cease-fire come then, the Israelis would have been hard pressed indeed. They had lost five airplanes over the canal before dark and 30 in the first 24 hours of the war. The Egyptians had solid positions on former IDF territory, had gained them at a very low cost, and had imposed unaccustomed casualties on the ground units of their enemy.[21]

The Egyptian plan bore little resemblance to the Soviet blitzkrieg doctrine, for it called for a defensive halt soon after the initial assaults. There was nothing there

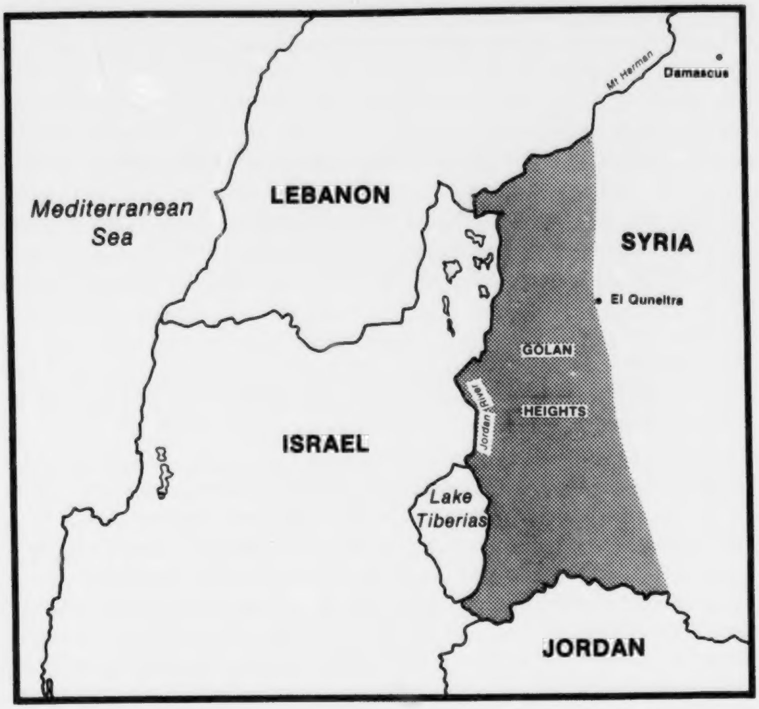

Figure 13. The Golan Heights.

resembling the German World War II Wehrmacht's deep penetration and exploitation by the armor after the infantry units had opened the holes. On the Golan Heights (fig. 13) the Syrian plan was more clearly based on the doctrine of their Soviet mentors. They began the assault with three mechanized infantry divisions; one to the north and two to the south of El Quneitra. The idea was to find the soft spots in the IDF line and to pass the two armored divisions through to exploit their success in the Israeli rear areas. The IDF defenses were similar to those along the canal: a series of strong points manned by infantry and supported by tank ramps built up between the fortifications. Tank traps were built which along with the whole system were designed to channel the attack into killing grounds where interlocking fields of fire would chew up the attack and delay the offensive until the mobilizations were complete and a counteroffensive could be launched.

The Israeli line to the north of Quneitra held (though barely), but the Syrians made serious inroads south of the town. Through the first night, the hopelessly outnumbered Israelis were driven back to the very edge of the Golan and the Syrians were at dawn looking down on the Bnot Yakov Bridge over the River Jordan hardly three miles away. The mobilizing reserves were being thrown into the battle piecemeal to keep the Syrians away from the bridge which carried the Israeli line of communications (LOC) forward to the battle area. The IAF's first mission for

Sunday, 7 October, was to take out the Egyptian missile defenses along the Suez Canal—indeed a vital mission. However, Moshe Dayan went early to the Golan front and when he saw the desperate situation there, he called upon Benjamin Peled, the commander of the air force, to divert his fighters to the Golan to hold the dyke until more ground forces could be mobilized during the day. Peled did this in a splendid demonstration of the flexibility of his force, which had already made the first couple of attacks in the south; it immediately reversed its field and suffered immensely at the hands of the SAM-6s and SAM-7s, but the line was held until fresh ground forces arrived that evening. During the next two days, Peled checked the Syrian offensive and the IDF drove the Arabs back to their original lines and beyond.[22]

REVERSING THE TIDE ON THE GOLAN

On Monday, 8 October, the mobilization in the Sinai had progressed far enough for the IDF to undertake an offensive there. The fog of war, among other things, caused the attack to become disjointed, and it ran onto the Egyptian-prepared positions head-on. The Israeli force gained a reversal with a considerable loss of equipment and a stinging shock to a force so accustomed to rolling over the Arab opposition. The realization was beginning to dawn on the Israeli (and the American) decision makers that the Arabs were not going to break and run this time. The war was not to be the short one that was expected. The consumption of materiel was extremely high, and new plans would be required on both fronts to adapt to the new conditions. Having weathered the initial storm, the IDF now decided to concentrate on the northern front in the hope of knocking Syria out of the war immediately. The battle area was close to the vital population centers of northern Israel. The Jordanians and Iraqis would doubtless come to the aid of the Syrians presently if the latter were not defeated, and the Soviet airlift would replenish the war supplies of the adversaries were it given time to do so. Moreover, there was more room to trade space for time in the Sinai, and the IDF could concentrate on the Egyptians once the Syrian threat was removed.[23]

On Thursday, 11 October, the IDF renewed its offensive against the Syrians and made good progress onto Syrian territory. The thrust was made in two columns with the northernmost using Mount Hermon as flank protection. Presently, the Jordanians and the Iraqis started to threaten the exposed right flank of the southern IDF column, which had to halt to deal with them. Although the Syrian army was driven back to a point about 20 miles west of Damascus, it did not break and run as it had in earlier wars. Its resistance was stiffening, the Soviet resupply was making itself felt through the air defense system, the problems of urban fighting were more than the IDF cared to tackle, and it was clear from Soviet actions that they would not take kindly to the penetration of their ally's capital. Thus, the IDF decided it was time to halt within artillery range of Damascus and turn their attentions to the southern front where things were becoming threatening.[24] Meanwhile, on the international scene, many prewar assumptions were collapsing and a superpower crisis was becoming a possibility. Ideally, the first step in any crisis response is to gather the facts.

SUPERPOWER INFORMATION GATHERING

Both the superpowers had satellites over the battlefields before and during the crisis, though the coverage was not continuous. Both had deployed reconnaissance aircraft in the region—the MiG-25 Foxbat in the Soviet case and the SR-71 in the US instance. Further, the United States had an air reconnaissance capability embarked in her carriers in the Mediterranean were additional resources necessary. There was also quite a close connection between the US intelligence community and that of Israel; but since the expulsion of the Soviets from Egypt in July 1972, the cooperation between Egypt and the USSR had become less than perfect.

President Sadat complains in his memoirs that the Israelis were getting good information from the US reconnaissance systems, but that his own knowledge of the battle zone was seriously degraded by faults in his own command and control system. He further asserts that though the Israelis received a wealth of information from the Americans, the Soviets were holding back on the intelligence they were acquiring from their satellites.[25] For the superpowers, then, there was an ample fund of raw intelligence both before and during the crisis. For the Israelis, it does not appear that any of their troubles arose from a lack of information; and for the Arabs, there is some room to suppose that timely data was not moving through the system to the decision makers as rapidly as it should have (after the battle had begun). Possibly, their superpower sponsor was not as generous as it might have been in passing on data—or was not able to pass it as readily as expected.

SUPERPOWER CONCERNS AND INCIPIENT CRISIS

The Yom Kippur War provides a fine case study to examine the tendency for the superpowers to both cooperate and compete in third world crises. The United States shared the USSR's desire to avoid escalation and to preserve détente, but her objective of guaranteeing the security of her client and her status among the Arabs tended to conflict not only with one another but also with Soviet ambitions for their clients and for Soviet standing in the Middle East.

Soviet Concerns

The Soviets confined their sales of air power systems mostly to defensive weapons such as surface-to-air missiles and interceptors. When the war broke out, the objectives of avoiding confrontation with the United States and, at the same time, preserving the USSR's status among the Arabs tended to come into conflict. The goals remained the same, but now it was a more delicate thing for the Soviets to protect their clients from humilitation without confronting the Americans or at least eroding détente.[26]

Anwar Sadat claims to have warned the Soviets of the imminence of war on Wednesday, 3 October. On the fourth, the Soviet ambassador to Cairo, Vladimir Vinogradov, came to Sadat and promised Soviet support during the coming conflict, and he requested permission to evacuate Soviet citizens by air the next day. Permission was granted, and the withdrawal was done on Friday through a military airfield to preserve secrecy. The United States and Israel found out about it immediately anyhow, and Sadat felt that the action demonstrated a certain lack of confidence on the part of the Soviets.[27]

The dilemma inherent in the Soviet objectives for the Middle East was accentuated with the coming of open combat. Right from the very outset, the USSR was trying to bring about a cease-fire, though always on the best possible terms for her clients. On the first day, Ambassador Vinogradov visited Sadat before sundown seeking his permission to begin Soviet negotiations for a cease-fire. Simultaneously, the Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, stayed in close contact with the US government through the weekend, also searching for a path to an immediate cease-fire. At the beginning, because both the Syrians and the Egyptians had made inroads, the Soviets were suggesting a cease-fire in place and the Americans wanted a cease-fire with a return to the status quo ante bellum. There was a bit of a squabble between Sadat and Vinogradov over the latter's assertion that even on the first day of the war, Sadat's ally, President Haffez Assad of Syria, wanted a cease-fire. In any case, Sadat, who believed that there were further gains for Egypt in the offing, was not at all inclined to take *that* early a cease-fire. The Syrians, who had grabbed a considerable piece of Golan Heights real estate (and who did not bring bridging equipment along on the offensive, indicating that they probably had no intention of crossing the Jordan below), might have been happy to take a cease-fire at the end of the weekend to make good their gains before the IDF could complete its mobilization. The Israelis, who were convinced that they would be able to restore their situation and improve on it once their mobilization was complete. were not inclined towards a cease-fire of any kind—much less one that would meet Sadat's requirement that the IDF evacuate all the Arab lands captured in 1967 with no prior compensation.[28]

American Concerns

The United States got word of the impending crisis at daybreak on Saturday (noon, Middle East time—six hours difference in time zones). Three hours later, at 0900 Washington time, the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG—a rump group made up of part of the members of National Security Council, including the secretaries of state and defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the director of central intelligence, and the president's national security assistant) met for the first time and held its second meeting late that same day. Basically, the group had only a limited role in actually making the decisions, though it was a useful vehicle for disseminating the President's and Henry Kissinger's decisions to the departments concerned, and for coordinating the actions of the latter.[29]

From the outset, Secretary of State Kissinger was determined to support the Israelis, but to do it in a measured way that would prevent the Arabs from suffering another humiliation. His hope was that both sides would emerge with enough ego intact, and with enough of a scare, that each would be more receptive to a negotiated settlement. In this way, (1) a confrontation of the superpowers could be avoided by limiting the length and the violence of the war; (2) détente could be preserved by making sure that the clients of both sides did not gain undue advantages over their adversaries; and (3) the US standing among the Arabs would be preserved and perhaps improved by giving the Arabs the understanding that America had acted in an evenhanded way during the war and that only she had enough leverage on the Jewish state to be able to extract the concessions desired by the Islamic world.

The approach was a cautious one. Kissinger was asking for a cease-fire based on the status quo ante bellum even though at that moment it looked like an outcome that would have been biased very much in favor of the US client. He explained that the Israeli mobilization and counteroffensive would surely reverse the tide and that we would soon see Jewish formations standing on Arab grounds. Then the United States could consistently stick with its status quo ante bellum policy, which would begin to appear to favor the Arabs and improve her standing with them—but, at the same time, since that had been the US policy when it favored the Israelis, the Jewish lobby in the US Congress could not logically oppose it later. As a first step towards implementation, the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean was ordered to sail eastward and one of its aircraft carriers was ordered to put to sea from Athens.[30]

Secretary Kissinger met with Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin during the day and communicated some of these ideas to him. Both sides asserted the need to keep the war limited and bring it to an end as soon as possible. Neither side seemed to have a great sense of urgency about it just then, and Kissinger felt that the completion of the IDF mobilization would improve the situation from his point of view. Meanwhile, he was communicating with Sadat through "back channels" that had been established in the days before he became secretary of state. This had been done not only because the United States and Egypt did not maintain diplomatic relations but also because there was some divergence in outlook between William Rogers' Department of State and the views of national security adviser Kissinger and the rest of the White House staff—the latter being the more "hawkish." Sadat (and Golda Meir) understood this and knew that the routine matters were handled by the President and his national security staff.[31] At any rate, Sadat was telling Kissinger that he was not about to agree to any cease-fire that did not provide for an immediate IDF evacuation of all the occupied territories, even though all concerned knew that the Israelis were certainly not ready to accept anything like that. The Americans, then, felt little urgency about it; the Soviets were apparently desirous of a cease-fire but not intensely worried about it yet; the Syrians would certainly like to have had one very soon; and the Egyptians were not at all interested in one.

Conditions for Cease-fire

Despite the complexity of the immediate conflict and the long-term implications for all concerned parties, the United States did manage to establish a number of clear objectives. They were:

1. The avoidance of the expansion of the war, especially to a nuclear confrontation between the superpowers.
2. The preservation of the existence of the Israeli state.
3. The preservation of détente with the USSR.
4. The prevention of an oil embargo or, failing that, the limitation of its impact on the economies of Japan, Western Europe, and the United States.
5. The preservation of and the improvement of US good relations with the Arab countries.
6. The preservation or improvement of NATO unity.
7. The establishment of an early and permanent peace in the Middle East.

It appears that Kissinger hoped to achieve these goals through the diplomatic instrument of national policy. It is clear that he and the President were quite willing to use the economic instrument as well, and that they were reluctantly prepared to employ military airlift. At the end of the crisis, however, the alert of the US armed forces possibly implied that they were also prepared, as a last resort, to actually send forces into combat in support of some of those goals.

The objective of preserving the Israeli state tended to contradict those of preventing an oil embargo and improving US relations with the Arab world. Henry Kissinger's remarks at the early meetings of the WSAG indicated that he understood this dilemma and he hoped to avoid it by pressing for an early cease-fire, one that would allow the Egyptians and Syrians to preserve some of their self-esteem and that would occur before Israeli armament stocks had diminished to the point where overt US replenishment would be required—which would in turn trigger an oil embargo and reverse the favorable trend in US-Arab relations. Some of the possible cease-fire options might have been: a cease-fire based on a return to the status quo ante bellum, one founded on a halt of the forces in the positions held at the end of the fighting, one based on an Israeli return to its borders of 1967, or some combination of these. At first Kissinger told the WSAG that he favored the first option though it appeared to be biased towards the interests of the US client. This arrangement would leave Kissinger in a position where he could hope to act as an impartial broker of permanent peace between the two sides—and such a permanent peace would serve all or most of the American objectives.[32]

With the benefit of hindsight, we may infer that the secretary's mind was conditioned excessively by recent history and perhaps by Western cultural biases so that he placed too high an estimate for the ability of the IDF to walk over the Arab armed forces. Kissinger wanted to achieve a cease-fire without either side making excessive gains, for only such a "peace without victory" would support the kind of permanent peace he desired. Of course, during the heady first weekend of the war, the Arabs were still insisting that a complete and immediate withdrawal of the

Israelis from all the captured Arab lands was the prerequisite of a cease-fire; and their sponsors, the Soviets, though they were more eager for an end to the fighting than was Sadat, were supporting a cease-fire based on such a withdrawal. Of course, the Israelis would have nothing to do with curtailment of any kind because they were sure they could radically change the balance once they got rolling on the battlefield.

The second option, a cease-fire in place, was not really an alternative to the cease-fire with a return to the prewar lines, but evolved out of it. As early as Tuesday, 9 October, through his back channels, Kissinger was proposing an in-place end to the fighting to the Eyptians. The Egyptians were still aiming far higher than that, but Kissinger already had some indications that the Soviets might be amenable to the American proposal.[33] Thus, he persuaded the British to present the proposal to Sadat on Friday the 12th, but Sadat turned it down cold expecting his offensive of the 14th to strengthen his negotiating position. Though the Soviets had apparently begun to worry because of the Israeli victories over the Syrians on the Golan Heights early in the week, the IDF had not done very well in the south and would soon need arms replenishment. Kissinger's dilemma on this was aggravated because he knew that the Israelis had a nuclear option of some sort, and he feared that they might be driven to such desperate straits that they would use it.[34] One bit of evidence that stimulated this worry was that the Israelis at the beginning of the week had rejected any notion of a cease-fire in place, and though the IDF had improved its position in the north during the week, the Egyptians still held onto all their gains in the Sinai. Now the Israelis were proposing to Kissinger that he forward a suggestion for such an end to the fighting (through some third power) to the Egyptians and the United Nations.[35]

GROWING SUPERPOWER TENSIONS

By the middle of the first week of the war it was clear to all, especially to the superpowers, that the short-war assumption was not going to hold. From the Soviet point of view, the reversal of Syrian fortunes in the north portended crisis ahead. Both they and the Syrians were urging renewed activity on the part of the Egyptians in the Sinai and participation in the struggle by the other Arab powers. The prolongation of the war had its good side and its bad side for Henry Kissinger. The longer it went on, the greater the chances of escalation and of the implementation of an oil embargo by the Arabs. Yet, the United States had not had much control of the foreign policy of its client ever since the Six-Day War—she had made no progress at all in convincing the Israeli elite that they should trade space in the Sinai for political guarantees.

Now that it was becoming clear the war would go on long enough that the IDF would require massive replenishment to stay in the fight, Kissinger began to see the possibility of using that dependency to induce the Israelis to be more flexible in the negotiations during and after the war. Consequently, when Simcha Dinitz repeatedly implored Kissinger to get the arms flow going and even threatened (implicitly) to mobilize the Jewish lobby in Congress against the administration, the Secretary of State had a delicate task: to manage the flow of arms to the IDF to both guarantee its survival and prevent its excessive victory while preventing further domestic political attacks on an administration that was already reeling from the Watergate charges. Further, all these tasks had to be done in a way that would not emit unduly bellicose signals towards the Soviets and that would preserve both peace and détente. Dinitz visited Kissinger repeatedly on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday urging that arms shipments begin. The Secretary assured him that Israeli losses would be replaced and that arrangements were being made, but made the excuse that he was having trouble getting the bureaucrats of the Pentagon to move. By midweek, some arms began to move, but only on El Al airplanes (whose markings had been painted over in the hope that they would not be recognized). Of course, the Israeli airline's most valiant efforts could never have met the requirements. Meanwhile the game between Dinitz and Kissinger plodded on through the week.

The first El Al flight departed Norfolk, Virginia, on Wednesday, 10 October, and on Thursday Kissinger told the Israeli ambassador that he was ordering the Pentagon to charter some US airlines to help the Jewish flyers deliver the goods. That night, Golda Meir's patience was wearing thin, and she tried to go over Kissinger's head with a call to his boss, President Nixon. On the next day, Friday, things were still not moving the way the Israelis thought they should. For some reason, none of the American airlines responded with a bid on the charter flights. That day, for a short time, there was some talk of developing an air line of communications that would use US Air Force airplanes as far as the base in the Azores; from there the goods would be transshipped by El Al for the rest of the journey to the Middle East—a real operational nightmare that would have been![36]

While the arguments over an aircraft were going on in Washington, the Soviet airlift was actually getting under way. After the USSR had made serious attempts to bring about an immediate cease-fire on terms advantageous to her clients over the weekend, apparently she decided that the Israeli successes in the north and the completion of the mobilization would so reverse the trend that the Soviets would have to do something concrete. Otherwise, their Arab clients might well be humiliated and cause the Soviets a loss of face that would entail an unacceptable erosion of the Soviet Middle East position.

Various concrete steps were taken from Monday, 8 October, onwards. First, seven Soviet airborne divisions were alerted for possible deployments.[37] The augmentation of the Soviet Mediterranean fleet began and its movements were cautious, but it never did reach proportions where it could seriously threaten the US Sixth Fleet.[38] During the middle of the week the most significant step was the commencement of a massive airlift from the Soviet arsenals to the Arab countries. There is some argument as to the time that the airlift started, and it is important because it is related to the question of the Soviet motivations. Some say it began on Tuesday, 9 October, which was the same day the Israelis bombed Damascus—allegedly in retaliation for the launching of some Syrian Frog surface-to-surface missiles against Jewish civilian targets. If so, then the Israeli bombing campaign cannot have been the stimulus of the airlift. However, most sources say the airlift began on Wednesday with 21 An-12 flights into Damascus, Syria. If that was the inception of the movement, then a part of the motivation could have been the accidental bombing of the Soviet cultural center in the Syrian capital in which at least one Soviet citizen was killed. Possibly, the Syrian difficulties on the Golan Heights, the apparent exhaustion of their missile stocks, and the bombing of Damascus all had an effect.

The Soviet airlift was highly exaggerated by the Israelis that first week and it seems to have been done at the rate of perhaps 30 sorties a day until Friday, 12 October. On that day, the Israeli navy sank a Soviet freighter in Latakia Harbor and reports were circulating that El Al aircraft were carrying material from the United States to the war zone. The military situation of the Syrians further deteriorated and the Soviets escalated their airlift to about 100 sorties a day, with the smaller An-12s going into Syria and Iraq and the large An-22s carrying weapons to Egypt.[39]

The Soviets were having no trouble getting overflight permission from Yugoslavia, and even NATO member Turkey was winking at the upward trend in the number of Aeroflot flights through its airspace. However, European NATO members almost uniformly were making it clear that US airlift sorties would *not* be welcome to transit their bases, and even Portugal was recalcitrant over the use of the one in the Azores.[40]

By the end of the first week, though Henry Kissinger may still have been dragging his feet, and though Anwar Sadat was still viewing events with a measure of satisfaction, things were becoming more stringent in Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Damascus. The Israelis were pressing Washington hard for more help in the shipment of arms, the Soviets and Syrians were leaning on Sadat trying to cause the Egyptian army to undertake an offensive that would relieve the pressure on the Arab armies in the north, and the Soviets were trying to stem the tide with the massive airlift.

US AIR POWER

Meanwhile, US air power began to have its effect on the crisis at the time of the Egyptian offensive of Sunday, 14 October. As we have seen, the Soviets had begun an important airlift to their clients during the first week, and the United States did not respond immediately for reasons that must remain speculative. However, the decision to go forward with a massive airlift using aircraft of the US Air Force was made on Saturday, 13 October, and the goal of exceeding the Soviet input to the struggle was made explicit from the start.[41]

At the outset those responsible for the airlift had to overcome a number of obstacles. No DOD contingency plan existed for aerial resupply to Israel; thus, the entire effort had to be planned and directed on an ad hoc basis. Moreover, since Congress had not approved purchase of stocks, the logistical support for Israel had to be provided from stocks designated for use by US forces. On a different level, international politics created operational problems concerning routing of flight. At first Portugal would only permit Lajes Field in the Azores to be used as a transshipment point for US and Israeli aircraft. Although the Portuguese soon relented, other NATO countries and Spain (at that time not a member) refused diplomatic clearance for US aircraft. Consequently, flights originating in West Germany flew a circuitous route that took them west to Lajes before heading east to Israel.

The airlift delivered approximately 22,400 tons of supplies and equipment to the Israelis, to include main battle tanks, fuel trucks, radars, munitions, and aircraft parts. Although only about 40 percent of the airlifted material arrived before the establishment of the cease-fire, the responsiveness of land-based aircraft clearly signaled US intentions to all direct and indirect participants and demonstrated its global reach by flying some 14,000 miles on each round-trip. Moreover, the airlift provided a badly needed morale boost for the Israelis, a point attested to by Golda Meir when the first air-delivered tank rolled off a C-5 aircraft at Lod airport in Israel.

Both US and Israeli sources generally credit the US airlift with being decisive, though some Israelis lament the fact that it demonstrated the dependence of the Jewish state. They also complain that the Arabs could not have committed the aggression without the assurance of material support from the Soviets and that the Soviet airlift sustained the Arab air defenses far beyond their native capacity and gave their armed forces an endurance they would not otherwise have enjoyed.

When compared to the USSR's, the US airlift carried more weight in fewer sorties over a much longer distance.[42] (See table 2.) There is no reason to suppose that the Soviet military airlift forces (VTAS) and their airline, Aeroflot, were going all out; and we know that MAC was not at the upper limit of its capacity and that none of the US Civil Reserve Airlift Force (CRAF) was mobilized for the task.

Table 2

Airlift during the Yom Kippur Crisis, 1973

	United States	El Al	USSR
Sorties	564	250	935
Weight in Tons:	22,400	5,500	16,000
Round-Trip Distance:	14,000 mi	14,000 mi	1,400 mi*

*Distance through Turkish airspace from the Crimea to Damascus and return. Some Soviet flights were known to have traveled that route, but more flew through the airspace over the Balkans which was a longer trip, but still much shorter than that for the Israeli and American planes. Also, remember that the Lod airport was one of the best-equipped air terminals in the third world and that it started the crisis with fuel reserves that were far larger than those in most places.

United States tactical and strategic air power played only indirect roles in the crisis, and, it appears, had their effects only late in the drama. The transfer of fighter-bombers from the United States and from the American forces in Europe did

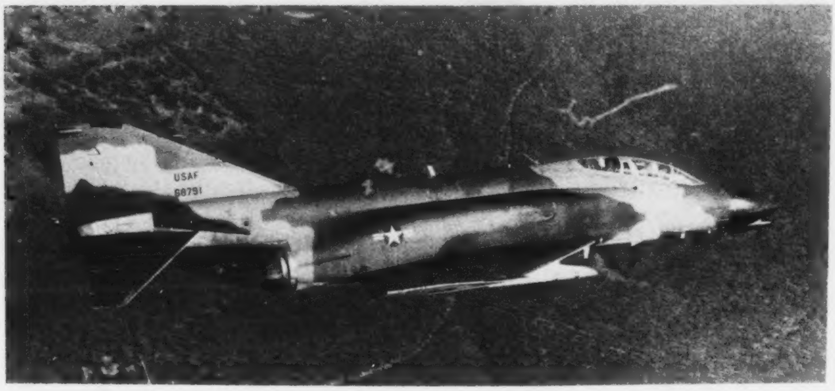

Figure 14. US Air Force F-4 Phantom.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

not begin until the weekend of the 13th. Thirty-six F-4 Phantoms, 20 A-4 Skyhawks (figs. 14 and 15) and 12 C-130 Herculeses were transferred to the IAF during the crisis, but that did not equal the Jewish losses of 103 fighters and 6 helicopters.[43] Perhaps more important was an input of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) and electronic countermeasures (ECM) equipment of unknown quantities. Sadat himself is vociferous in his complaints about the Maverick, and sources on both sides credit the import of new ECM equipment as being a salvation for the IAF.[44]

Normally, one cannot give much credence to the testimony of the primary actors as to the decisiveness of the various instruments; but in the Israeli case, words attesting to the worth of the US airlift, aircraft, and munitions tend to weaken their own position in the relationship with the United States (Israel's sole supplier) and,

Figure 15. US Navy A-4 Skyhawk.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

therefore, are not likely to be issued lightly. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, for example, said "I hate to think what our situation would have been if the United States had withheld its air, or what we would do if Washington were to turn its back on Israel one of these days."[45] Golda Meir herself remarked that "at last Nixon himself ordered the giant C-5 Galaxies to be sent, and the first flight arrived on the ninth day of the war, on October 14 the airlift was invaluable. It not only lifted our spirits, but also served to make the American position clear to the Soviet Union, and it undoubtedly served to make our victory possible."[46]

Beyond a doubt, US airlift was crucial to the decision making during the Yom Kippur crisis. On the Arab side, there was no particular desire for a long war, but the issue of speedy replenishment by airlift was never a question. The Israeli assumption was that any war would be made so short that it could be managed with the stocks on hand—it *had* to be managed with the stocks on hand. As soon as it became apparent that the war would not fulfill that assumption, then the issue of a rapid airlift from the United States became a burning question. There have been some arguments that, in the materiel sense, the US airlift did not determine the outcome of the war for the Israelis, and it is possible that the total consumption on the Israeli side did not exceed the total stocks on hand at the onset of the fighting. According to this interpretation, the thing that was important was the signal that the mounting of the airlift sent to the USSR and the Arabs. Though very little of the American materiel actually got into combat, the United States had publicly committed herself to the prevention of an Israeli humiliation, and it was that potential threat that moderated the Soviet and Arab munitions.[47] Perhaps the notion that the US airlift had only a moral and indirect effect goes too far. It is quite clear that the tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) antitank weapon got into combat in some numbers and that the Maverick television (TV) bomb brought in by the airlift worked a good bit of mayhem—there is testimony from both sides on this point.[48] Whatever the effect of the individual weapons, though, they would not have had any impact had it not been for the responsiveness and capability of land-based US air power.

Airlift aside, the events in the Sinai eventually led to a superpower interaction that involved not only the remaining US land-based aircraft but the entire US military force structure as well. Main contributing factors were the Israeli threat to destroy the Egyptian Third Army and the possibility of direct Soviet involvement with combat troops.

THE CROSSING TO "AFRICA"

The Egyptians had committed the bulk of their armor to the east side of the Suez at the outset of the war but, unfortunately, lost a good portion of it during a major battle on 14 October. The Israelis, likewise, had suffered high tank losses, but they were in a better position—in part, because airlifted supplies and equipment from the United States began arriving that day. Assured of continued US resupply, they began a major counteroffensive. Long before the war, the Israelis had anticipated the need to cross to Egypt proper, and they had the bridging equipment and the engineers standing by in the desert from the beginning. The initial units went over in boats to secure a bridgehead during the night of 15–16 October and by morning there were two complete Israeli brigades on the nether bank. Even though the Egyptian command and control system was seriously weak and Cairo little understood its growing predicament, the Israeli position was, for a time, rather precarious. The Egyptians tried to pinch off the single corridor that General Ariel Sharon had found down to the canal and came near doing it during the next couple of days. Perhaps the fiercest battle of the entire war was fought at the "Chinese Farm" on the east bank just north of the corridor; it delayed the building of the bridges until the middle of the week. The first one was finally across on the evening of 17 October, and two more were opened very soon thereafter.

At the beginning of the war, the Egyptian air force had made an initial strike in the Sinai and then withdrawn into its shelters to constitute a kind of reserve. The hope was that after the missiles had decimated the IAF, then the Egyptian aircraft would be able to roam freely and they could be brought in for close air support (CAS). Now, though the IAF was still alive and well (and in fact was being replenished from US stores), the Egyptians slowly began to recognize their plight and they brought out their airmen—even though it was a bit of a forlorn hope. By all accounts, the Egyptian pilots fought gallantly in their attempt to get the IDF bridges, but they were outclassed and suffered grievously. The IAF prevailed, and the single line of communications to the ground forces on the west bank was secured by the end of the week.[49]

KOSYGIN'S EMERGENCY MISSION TO CAIRO

Up to the time of the Israeli crossing, the USSR was doing quite well in moving toward all her objectives. Anatoly Dobrynin, Soviet ambassador to Washington, was in continual contact with Henry Kissinger, and they were generally cooperating in trying to get their clients to agree to a cease-fire on some reasonable compromise. Both seemed to feel that the most desirable outcome would be close to a stalemate, but with sufficient achievements for the Arabs to allow them to save face after the war had ended. There was no big threat, apparently, to either the peace or détente, and the fact that the Egyptians were standing firmly on ground formerly held by the IDF promised that the Soviet standing among the Arabs would be improved, or at least preserved. But things began to turn for the worse for the Soviets on the second Sunday of the war—and they were quicker than their clients to recognize the impending dangers.

One of the oddities of this crisis was that both the patrons were better informed about events on the battlefields than were the combatants themselves. Both superpowers enjoyed information coming back from their reconnaissance satellites and very high-altitude aircraft. Both had the former hovering above the battlefield through the war, and the American SR-71s and the Soviet Foxbats also were keeping an eye on events.[50] This was particularly true for happenings in Egypt after

15 October when even Sadat admits that his own command and control system was not delivering up the truth in a timely way.[14]

Sources have said that Aleksei Kosygin's sudden trip to Egypt had its origins in the information the Soviets were deriving from their satellite, which revealed the Israelis had crossed to the west bank the night before. However, the Soviets did not have a satellite over the battlefield at just that time, though they did recover one just before the Israelis crossed. Any information they derived from that satellite would have had to do with the situation on the Syrian plain. Further, the satellite had not been over the Sinai on Sunday, so it could not have brought back data on the Egyptian losses there. Thus, whatever information stimulated Kosygin to fly down to Cairo on Tuesday evening, must have come from high-altitude reconnaissance flights.[52]

During the day, Golda Meir made a speech to the Knesset in which she alluded to IDF troops now operating on the west side (then being referred to as "Africa" by the prideful IDF troops) of the canal. Probably Kosygin did not know about it, and even the Egyptians were not really aware of what was going on just a few miles east of their capital. Mohammed Heikal, who was close to the Egyptian government throughout, claims that the first hint he had of the IDF presence was through listening to the broadcast of Golda Meir's speech.[53] In any event, the Soviets seemed significantly more concerned than Sadat, because Kosygin urged an immediate cease-fire during his first meeting with the Egyptian president just after he landed in Cairo. Sadat still thought he was winning, and they argued on and on until Thursday, 18 October, when, apparently, Kosygin showed Sadat some photographs that finally overcame the optimism of the president. Sadat then dropped his demand for the immediate evacuation of all the occupied territories and agreed to a cease-fire in place. Kosygin appears to have left Cairo early Friday morning with Sadat's consent to a procedure that had already been tentatively agreed to by all the other principal actors. That same day, President Brezhnev sent an urgent message to Washington asking that either Secretary of State Kissinger travel immediately to Moscow or Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko go to the United States. The idea was to immediately make the final arrangements for the end of the fighting.[54]

CEASE-FIRE

While Kosygin and Sadat were thrashing out an agreement in Cairo, the conflict was widening and becoming more menacing to world peace and prosperity. Both Iraq and Jordan had gotten into the fighting in the north during the previous week, but without much effect. President Houari Boumedienne of Algeria had gone to Moscow at the beginning of the second week of the war to urge greater support of the Arab cause on the Soviet decision makers. On Monday, 15 October, he agreed to pay the USSR $100 million each for both Syria and Egypt if the Soviets would increase their arms deliveries—and there was a definite increase in the flow of arms in the days that followed. Many of the members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) had already embargoed the flow of oil to the United States and restricted production, but Saudi Arabia still held out. As the latter country was by far the largest producer in the Middle East, the oil weapon could hardly have its full effect without its participation. However, just after Kosygin left Cairo for Moscow, the US Congress passed a huge aid-to-Israel bill to the tune of $2.2 billion. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, already distressed about the airlift, was thereby driven into unity with the rest of OAPEC, and he cut off all oil shipments to the United States and significantly reduced production.[55]

Meanwhile, the IDF, having broken into the open country beyond the canal, was creating a new situation that threatened both escalation and the undermining of the possibility of building an enduring Middle East peace were the cease-fire finally imposed. General Sharon was leading the northernmost forces, which were not making much progress against Ismailia but were tearing up some of the SAM sites, which, in turn, gave the IAF more freedom to support thrusts by the ground forces. The southernmost forces commanded by Maj Gens Kalman Magen and Avrahan Adan were rolling through lightly defended and open terrain, fully supported now by air forces, and making good progress towards the Gulf of Suez and the complete encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army still standing on the other bank. There was an argument going on among the Egyptian generals as to whether to come back over the canal in an attempt to restore the situation, or to just stand in place on the east bank in the hope that the cease-fire would come soon enough to limit the damage being done by the IDF. Those in favor of standing fast prevailed, partly because of the fear that once the armies were brought out of their positions into a confused situation a complete rout might ensue.[56]

A rout of the Egyptian forces was the last thing Henry Kissinger wanted, and after he received a call from Moscow late on Friday, he emplaned at Andrews AFB during the early hours of Saturday, 20 October. The power of decision was actually becoming more concentrated in his hands because of the growing domestic problems arising from Watergate, which tended to fully distract the President from foreign policy.[57]

The Secretary of State did not stop to rest after his arrival in Moscow late on 20 October but immediately conferred with Brezhnev, who was still insisting that the cease-fire be linked directly with the immediate Israeli evacuation of all the "occupied" territories. Kissinger knew a cease-fire contingent on evacuation had no chance of approval by the Israelis (or the Americans, for that matter) now that the IDF was making such good progress on the west bank. By Sunday morning the urgency for the Soviets and their clients had become greater, and their cease-fire proposal had changed. The Soviets were then ready to accept an immediate cease-fire in place linked only to the ultimate accomplishment of UN Resolution 242 (which had called for an eventual return of Israel to the pre-1967 borders), but were worrying that the Israelis would break the cease-fire. Egypt and the USSR were urging that the United States take strenuous measures to guarantee that the IDF not repeat its 1967 actions when it gained the entire Golan Heights *after* the UN-mandated cease-fire had come into effect. After ll hours of negotiation on Sunday, the USSR and the United States reached an agreement, and it only remained to get the acquiescence of the clients and have the UN Security Council pass a resolution to give effect to the arrangement. Ambassador Dinitz in Washington was trying to get a delay so as to permit the IDF to complete its encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army, and Golda Meir called upon President Nixon personally trying to get more time (Sunday evening). The President firmly backed his Secretary of State and granted only that Kissinger would come back home through Israel so as to explain the cease-fire directly to Meir's cabinet. The consent of the Israelis could not wait, however, and no change was to be permitted in the terms of the cease-fire. The Security Council was even then preparing to meet in New York; and just after midnight, it did indeed pass the resolution, without change, to take effect just 12 hours later, at 7:58 p.m., Monday, 22 October (Middle East time—12:58 p.m. New York time.) It provided (1) a cease-fire in the positions held on 22 October, (2) the commencement of negotiations between Israelis and Arabs "under appropriate auspices," and (3) the commitment to implement UN Resolution 242. All the primary actors except Syria had agreed to its terms officially.[58]

It appeared that the war had been ended without a truly clear advantage to either side. The Syrians had been driven off the Golan Heights, and in a last-minute bloody assault, the IDF had recaptured the observation post at the summit of Mount Hermon. Though the IDF was rampaging on the west bank of the canal, its encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army apparently was not quite complete and the Egyptians held important positions on the east bank. The Syrians had the preparations for a counteroffensive in the north underway, and their army, though it had retreated, had not collapsed as it had in earlier wars. The Egyptians, too, came out of the war saying that the IDF had been vulnerable to a counterstroke on the west bank, but it seems that there was less likelihood of that happening than was the case in the north.

As promised, Kissinger returned from Moscow via Israel. He paused there during the middle of Monday, 22 October, and spoke with the cabinet in the strongest of terms. Though there has been one report that Kissinger implied that the United States would not be too upset if the IDF went on fighting for a while after the cease-fire time, the weight of the literature very heavily suggests otherwise. The US Secretary of State had a good lever on Israeli policy, and the cabinet members themselves also had solid reasons for desiring a cease-fire that counterbalanced whatever incentives there were for a short continuation of the fighting.[59]

If a cease-fire ever really came that evening, it is certain that it was broken very soon thereafter. Of course, each side blames the other, and it is probably impossible to prove just who was at fault. In any event, the fighting went on through the 23 October and by Tuesday evening, the IDF had reached the shore of the Gulf of Suez somewhat south of the city of the same name. There it linked up with units of the Israeli navy operating in the Gulf, and the surrounding of the Egyptian Third Army was complete. Perhaps a reasonable guess is that units of the Third Army just did not get the word from an inadequate command and control systems, or that they violated their orders in reaction to their desperate straits and tried to break out. Further guessing, the IDF, still smarting from its earlier reverses might well have felt a frustration at being halted just shy of a smashing victory. Consequently, if indeed the Egyptians tried to break out, then it would not have been remarkable at all had the IDF gone all out to make the best of it and to close the ring by moving down to the shore of the Gulf of Suez.

The UN Security Council met again late on 23 October and repeated its demand for the cease-fire and ordered that the engaged forces return to their positions of the previous day. This time, the Council did make some provision for observation and enforcement by sending its observer team from Cairo to the battle zone. The team arrived at the west bank early on Wednesday, 24 October, but it could not go to the front because the fighting was still going on. Kissinger had been furious when he landed in Washington on the 23d and had called Mrs Meir during the night demanding an immediate halt. He was fearful the Soviets would think he had double-crossed them and was either unable or (especially) unwilling to control the actions of his client. It is possible that by this time—dawn on the 24th—the IDF would have been perfectly willing to stop the fight but that it did not have the choice because Egyptian units were trying to break out of their predicament. It is possible, too, that the fighting really was winding down but that the process took longer than was appreciated by those far away from the battle. Whatever was going on at the front, the situation was hectic in Cairo. At 9 p.m., 24 October (Egyptian time, 3 p.m. in Washington and New York) Sadat issued a call to the superpowers for the deployment of a joint US-USSR military force to the battle zone to impose the cease-fire, creating what many have described as a full-blown crisis.[60]

WORLD CRISIS

Throughout the war, superpower policy had been cautious and deliberate. The concern for peace and the preservation of détente was obvious on both sides, though there were charges in America that the Soviets were breaking the rules of détente. Both the United States and the USSR were leaning heavily on their clients to limit their excesses and to agree to an early cease-fire—and perhaps to measures that would lead to a permanent peace in the Middle East. The Americans and the Soviets had been using their military forces to signal both concern and reserve to adversaries and to attempt to control the actions of their clients within the desired bounds. However, in spite of that record, during the night of 24–25 October, it suddenly seemed that things might get out of control.

The immediate United States response to Sadat's request to dispatch troops was that we opposed such a measure.[61] The United States, Kissinger assured Sadat, was using other means to achieve the desired end and dispatching troops to such a troubled area would be both dangerous and unnecessary. The initial response of Ambassador Dobrynin in Washington was rather placid and did not seem to portend any trouble. There was no indication at first that the Soviets had any intention of honoring the Egyptian request, but later in the evening, Dobrynin announced that the USSR was then in favor of dispatching a joint force to the Middle East. Later still on the evening of 24 October (Washington time), Dobrynin called Kissinger relaying a message from Brezhnev. It again urged a joint operation to prevent the Israelis from "getting away with" their violations and suggested that if the Americans did not see fit to go along with the Soviets, then the latter would consider going alone. Though the threat was hedged and was neither ironclad nor in

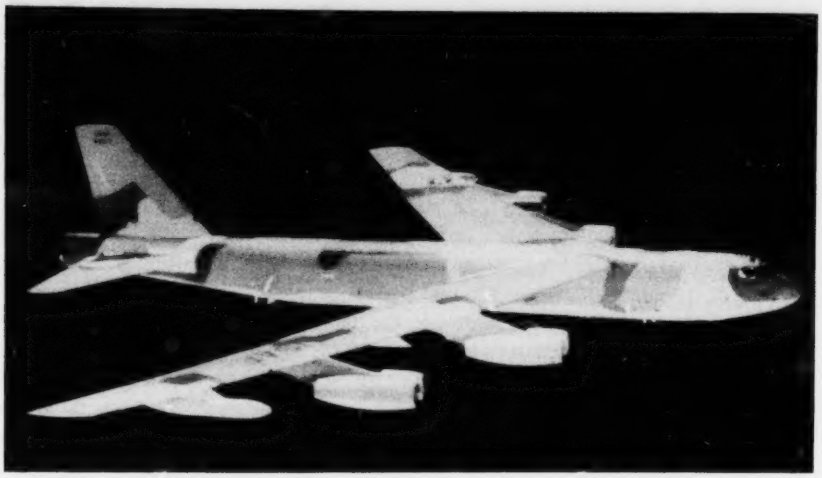

Figure 16. The redeployment of US Air Force B-52 Stratofortresses may have played an important role in stabilizing the crisis in the Middle East.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

any way an ultimatum, it provoked a strong response in Washington. Kissinger reacted first by consulting with President Nixon, who gave him permission to raise the alert status of the American military if that became necessary. The WSAG met and a three-part action emerged:

(1) The US armed forces were placed in a defense readiness condition (DEFCON) 3 status, which was one of increased alert calling only for cancelation of leave and minimal redeployments of B-52s (fig. 16) and other bombers.

(2) Brezhnev was sent a message reassuring him that the United States was taking the strongest measures possible to guarantee that the IDF would discontinue all but defensive military actions and suggesting that a UN force be sent to the Middle East, but that it be composed of soldiers only from those states without a Security Council veto.

(3) Israel was sent a message demanding an immediate halt to all offensive operations under threat of denial of material or, if it came to that, leaving the IDF to face a Soviet intervention alone. The alert began at 0300 (0900 Middle East time) on 25 October.

During the course of Thursday, it gradually became clear that the fighting was coming to an end. Early that afternoon, the Soviet representative at the United Nations came over to the American position on the composition of the UN force.[62] That ended the crisis, and in the ensuing days and months the Israelis were first forced to permit water and supplies in to the Egyptian Third Army and later forced to move back to their own side of the canal and to gradually withdraw further back into the Sinai.

Throughout the entire Yom Kippur crisis, the United States used its land-based aircraft with considerable skill and effectiveness. At the outset, the United States took advantage of the responsiveness inherent in land-based aircraft by delaying airlift support for Israel. Although the delay was not without risk, it enabled the United States to appear somewhat evenhanded in the crisis, rather than overly biased in favor of the Israelis; moreover, the delay permitted the Soviets to make the first move. It is perhaps instructive that the Soviets initiated their airlift effort approximately four days before the United States, despite their close proximity to the combat area. Once underway, the US effort clearly provided the support and reinforcement the Israelis needed and thus conveyed a further signal of American commitment to the Egyptians, Syrians, and Soviets. The US airlift began to arrive just as the Israeli counterattack carried them across the Suez into Egyptian territory. As a result of the crossing, Israeli forces were positioned west of Suez, while Egyptian forces remained in the Sinai. When viewed in terms of crisis interaction, this new force deployment situation most likely created a condition that might not have been possible without the timely assistance of US land-based aircraft.

At that point, however, the Soviet hint that they might unilaterally deploy their already alerted airborne troops to the area changed the situation and tended to raise the level of uncertainty. Had the United States not responded with a DEFCON 3 alert, the uncertainty about her intentions, perhaps, would have encouraged actual Soviet deployment. By responding firmly, and particularly by including the B-52 redeployments, the United States probably accomplished several objectives. First, the American response signaled a most serious concern about Soviet actions, simply because a move to put one's combat and support forces in a higher state of readiness for war is a step not taken lightly. The DEFCON 3 alert decreased the existing level of uncertainty by making US intentions more obvious, thus tending to stabilize the crisis once again. Second, the United States may well have deterred the Soviets from intervening with airborne troops, and, more significantly, may have modified the specific Soviet behavior that led to their alerting decision at the outset. Finally, the US alert clearly offset the Soviet alert status by placing US airborne troops into a deployment posture roughly equal to that of the Soviets, thus restoring the bargaining atmosphere.

At the termination of the crisis, US land-based aircraft played three separate and vital roles: (1) it provided a means to threaten the Soviets and, thus, probably contributed to Soviet behavior modification; (2) it put pressure on the Israelis by threatening to end the airlift, thus forcing the Israelis to terminate further action against the Egyptian Third Army; and (3) it provided the necessary degree of military, diplomatic, and psychological support that permitted the Israelis, as they have fully admitted, to survive.

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NOTES

CHAPTER 5

1. A first class piece of scholarship covering these events is Nadav Safran, *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1978), particularly chapters 4, 5, 14 & 15. A briefer, but competent treatment (leaning against Israel) is George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, 4th ed. (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell, 1980), chapters 10 and 12.

2. In addition to the works cited in footnote 1, this situation is competently covered in William B. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967–1976* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1977). Quandt, who was a member of the National Security Council staff, writes with a facile pen and special insight.

3. Two primary sources that are interesting if taken with a grain of salt are: Anwar el-Sadat, *Anwar el-Sadat: In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) and Mohammed Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan* (New York: New York Times Book Co., 1975). Heikal, the editor of an Egyptian newspaper, is a competent writer and a protégé of Nasser. He was frequently in contact with Sadat and other primary actors during the events described, but not so close to them as to Nasser. As in the case with Sadat's book, Hiekal is sometimes given to rather extravagant statements arising from his nationalistic spirt. See also Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1982), 460.

4. Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 181–220.

5. William B. Quandt, *Soviet Policy in the October 1973 War*, Rand Report No. R-1864-15A (Santa Monica, Calif., May 1976).

6. Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 230–33.

7. Safran, *Embattled Ally*, 468.

8. Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 236.

9. Insight Team, London Sunday Times, *The Yom Kippur War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday 1975), 15; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 460.

10. William E. Griffith, "The Fourth Middle East War, The Energy Crisis and U.S. Policy," *Orbis* 17 (Winter 1974): 1188; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 460–67.

11. Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 241.

12. Golda Meir, *My Life* (New York: Putnam's, 1975), 424–35.

13. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 167–69.

14. Meir, *My Life*, 425.

15. Maj Gen Chaim Herzog, IDF, *The War of Atonement: October 1973* (Boston, Mass.; Little, Brown, 1975), 40–59.

16. Moshe Dayan; *Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life* (New York: Morrow, 1976), 459–61.

17. Meir, *My Life*, 426–27.

18. Quandt, *Soviet Policy*, iii; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 469 speculates that the evacuation may have been a tacit USSR warning to the United States.

19. Galia Golan, *Yom Kippur and After* (London: Cambridge University, 1977), 4–13.

20. Nadav Safran, "Trial by Ordeal: The Yom Kippur War, October, 1973," *International Security* 2 (Fall 1977): 141. Safran's article is perhaps the best short description of the military side of the 1973 conflict.

21. Col T. N. Dupuy, USA (Ret.), "The War of Ramadan: An Arab Perspective of the October War," *Army* 25 (March, 1975): 15.

22. Herzog, *War of Atonement*, 57–94.

23. "Middle East War," *Strategic Survey, 1973* (London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1974), 17–19; Historical Evaluation and Research Organization, "The Middle East War of October 1973," unpublished report to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 1976), 150–74. (Hereinafter referred to as the Hero Report.)

24. Safran, "Trial by Ordeal," 155–56.

25. Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 259–60, 262.

26. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After*, 2–13.

27. Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 246–47. The evacuation entailed a serious risk of giving away the secrecy of the move. Western intelligence, though, demonstrated the power of preconceptions by explaining away the evacuation as a continuation of the Egyptian program of reducing the Soviet presence in their country. Quandt, *Soviet Policy*, 11–12, says that though others thought it was a Soviet tacit signal to the United States that would bring about the mobilization of Israel—and a consequent Arab decision not to go to war without causing the latter to blame the USSR for a lack of nerve—he thinks that it was more likely a signal to the United States showing that the USSR did not want war, did not instigate it, and was more interested in preserving détente than supporting the Arabs.

28. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After*, 127; Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, 252–54; Janice Grosstein, "Proxy Wars—How Superpowers End Them: The Diplomacy of War Termination in the Middle East," *International Journal* 35 (Summer 1980): 500.

29. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 169–72.

30. Ibid.; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 467–69.

31. Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan*, 152.

32. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 171; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 476.

33. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 178.

34. Safran, *Embattled Ally*, 480–82.

35. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 182.

36. Insight Team, *Yom Kippur War*, 272–73, 275, 278; Edward N. Luttwak and Walter Laqueur, "Kissinger and the Yom Kippur War," *Commentary* 58 (September 1974): 34. Laqueur and Luttwak argue that there are two possible interpretations of Kissinger's conduct during that week. They say the one Kissinger seemed to be trying to project was that he was highly sympathetic to the cause of the Israelis. According to their interpretation, the Secretary was doing his best to stimulate a massive American airlift to Israel, but he was being thwarted at every turn by the bureaucrats in the Pentagon who were terrified by a possible oil embargo and dominated by Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements, a Texan with important connections with the oil industry. It wasn't until Friday night, 12 October, that President Nixon finally stepped in to break the logjam. The contrary interpretation is that the whole episode was an elaborate charade conceived by Kissinger to prevent the humiliation of the Arabs without bringing down the wrath of the Jewish lobby on his neck. Supposedly he did this to preserve the Arab self-image so that a negotiated final settlement would be possible after the war. Kissinger wanted such a settlement, once and for all, to end the threat to US oil supplies and to her whole position in the Middle East—both of which could easily arise out of instability in that region. Proponents of this view argue that the notion that William Clements had the power to resist the desires of Kissinger was nonsense. Rather, the Pentagon was following the Secretary of State's orders (firmly backed by the President) explicitly. Further evidence is cited in the transshipment scheme that was proposed on Friday. Journalist Tad Szulc, who developed the basic view, asserts that such a scheme was wildly impractical and could not have originated among the practical airlifters on the staff at the DOD. Thus, it must have been a Department of State plan not to prevent the delivery of the goods, but rather to delay their delivery a while longer. Laqueur and Luttwak support Szulc's view. For Kissinger's interpretation, see Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 468–515, especially 501 and 513.

37. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After*, 86.

38. Ibid., 127.

39. Grosstein, "Proxy Wars," 502; Insight Team, *Yom Kippur War,* 275–78; Quandt, *Soviet Policy,* footnote 19.

40. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions,* 180.

41. Nixon, *Memoirs* (New York: Warner, 1978), 2:483–84; Marvin and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1974), 474–78; Quandt, *Decade of Decisions,* 187.

42. Figures in Table 2 are based on Hero Report, 159a and on *Strategic Survey, 1973,* 27.

43. Hero Report, 184–86.

44. Sadat, *In Search of Identity,* 261, 263; Lt Col Richard V. Hartman, USN, and Rear Adm Julian S. Lake, USN (Ret.) "Air Electronic Warfare," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 102 (July 1976): 42–49; Edward Luttwak and Dan Horowitz, *The Israeli Army,* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 351.

45. Moshe Dayan, *Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life* (New York: Morrow, 1976), 511.

46. Meir, *My Life,* 431.

47. Ibid; Hero Report, 161 asserts that only one planeload of tanks ever made its way to Israel before the end of the fighting. It was unloaded at Lod, not Al–Arish, and Israeli propaganda made a big thing of it. This study doubts that any of the five tanks ever got into combat. Yet the image created in Sadat's mind appears to be quite different from reality:

> Al-Arish became an airbase where colossal US transport aircraft landed, loaded with tanks and sophisticated weapons. Al-Arish is an Egyptian city; it is the capital of Sinai, and lay directly behind the front. . . . I noticed that every time I destroyed a dozen tanks, more tanks were to be seen on the battlefield. The United States was taking part in the war to save Israel . . . and the Americans were using the Egyptian Al-Arish airfield, immediately behind the front, quite openly, so as to turn Israel's defeat into victory. . . . Soon, however, I found that they were facing hundreds of tanks which the United States supplied to the Israelis on the spot.

Sadat, *In Search of Identity,* 260–65.

48. Robert Hotz, "Israeli Air Faces New Arab Arms," in *Both Sides of the Suez,* eds., *Aviation Week and Space Technology* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975), 10; Sadat, in *In Search of Identity,* 263: "It was obvious now that the United States could destroy my entire air defense system with the TV–camera bombs, and thus give the Israelis the 'open skies' of Egypt they had enjoyed in 1967."

49. Safran, "Trial by Ordeal," 160–64; Martin van Creveld, *Military Lessons of the Yom Kippur War* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1975) 19; Herzog, *War of Atonement,* 210–20.

50. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After,* 105–9.

51. Sadat, *In Search of Identity,* 261–62.

52. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After,* 106.

53. Heikal, *The Road to Ramadan,* 231; Safran, *Embattled Ally,* 484. Sadat, too, is supposed to have learned of it from Meir's speech.

54. Sadat, *In Search of Identity,* 258–59; Quandt, *Soviet Policy,* 28–30; Safran, *Embattled Ally,* 484–89. Sadat's book is, of course, a primary source but it is so self–serving that it is deemed unreliable. He denies rather emphatically that he gave Kosygin consent to the cease–fire before the latter went back to Moscow. Both the other sources cited above seem reliable and are explicit in their assertions that Koysgin did indeed have the consent of Egypt and, judging from the ensuing events, their interpretations are probably the more accurate.

55. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After,* 100; Safran, *Embattled Ally,* 188; Insight Team, *Yom Kippur War,* 362.

56. Safran, "Trial by Ordeal," 164.

57. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After,* 127; Quandt, *Decade of Decisions,* 192.

58. Insight Team, *Yom Kippur War,* 378; Safran, *Embattled Ally,* 490; Quandt, *Decade of Decisions,* 192; Meir, *My Life,* 438–40; Sadat, *In Search of Identity,* 260–66.

59. Quandt, *Decade of Decisions,* 193.

60. Golan, *Yom Kippur and After,* 113–15; Insight Team, *Yom Kippur War,* 401–6; Quandt, *Decade of Decisions,* 119.

61. Heikal, *Road to Ramadan,* 253, takes some pains to explain that the Egyptians had never intended that any superpower troops be dispatched. Rather, he said, that notion arose in Kissinger's mind either

from a misinterpretation of the substance of Sadat's message or from a mistranslation of intercepted traffic between Sadat and Assad over what Sadat thought might have been a Syrian request for Soviet soldiers. Heikal insists that all the Egyptians wanted was observers, not armed men. The Arabic word involved can be translated to either "personnel" or "forces" and that ambiguity may have caused the trouble.

62. Heikal, *Road to Ramadan*, 250–59; Safran, *Embattled Ally*, 492–95; Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, 194–200.

CHAPTER 6

CRISES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

We now turn our attention to central Africa (fig. 17) to examine the use of land-based air power in a number of interactions occurring between 1960 and 1978. The initial effort focuses on the Belgian Congo when it became independent in 1960. Major instability during the four years following led to United Nations (UN) involvement totaling 20,000 troops, a bilateral US-Belgium operation, and a unilateral Soviet involvement. A decade and a half later, during which time the Congo had been renamed Zaire, troops from a number of nations, including military airlift resources from the United States, were involved in yet another crisis there.

THE CONGO CRISIS, 1960–63

The crisis at the birth of Zaire had a dual nature. The first causes were that the Belgians had yet to train a native administrative cadre and that anarchy resulted when the Belgians pulled out of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (later Zaire) rather abruptly in June of 1960. Order in the Congo depended on a military force made up of indigenous troops led by Belgian officers. A few days after independence, the troops revolted and began to eject the Belgian officers from their ranks. Order broke down and the Belgian citizens feared for their lives. The Belgian government responded on 10 July by deploying 10,000 troops without invitation from the Congolese central government. The second cause centers around Katanga Province (fig. 18), by far the richest in the new state and the major source of its revenue. As the Belgian troops were arriving, the Katangese, led by Moise Tshombe and supported by Belgian and British capitalists with an interest in local mining ventures, declared independence from the central government in Kinshasa, led by President Joseph Kasavubu, and Premier Patrice Lumumba. Kasavubu came to be favored by the West, which at that time could still swing a majority vote in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Lumumba was to be the favorite of the Communist world.[1]

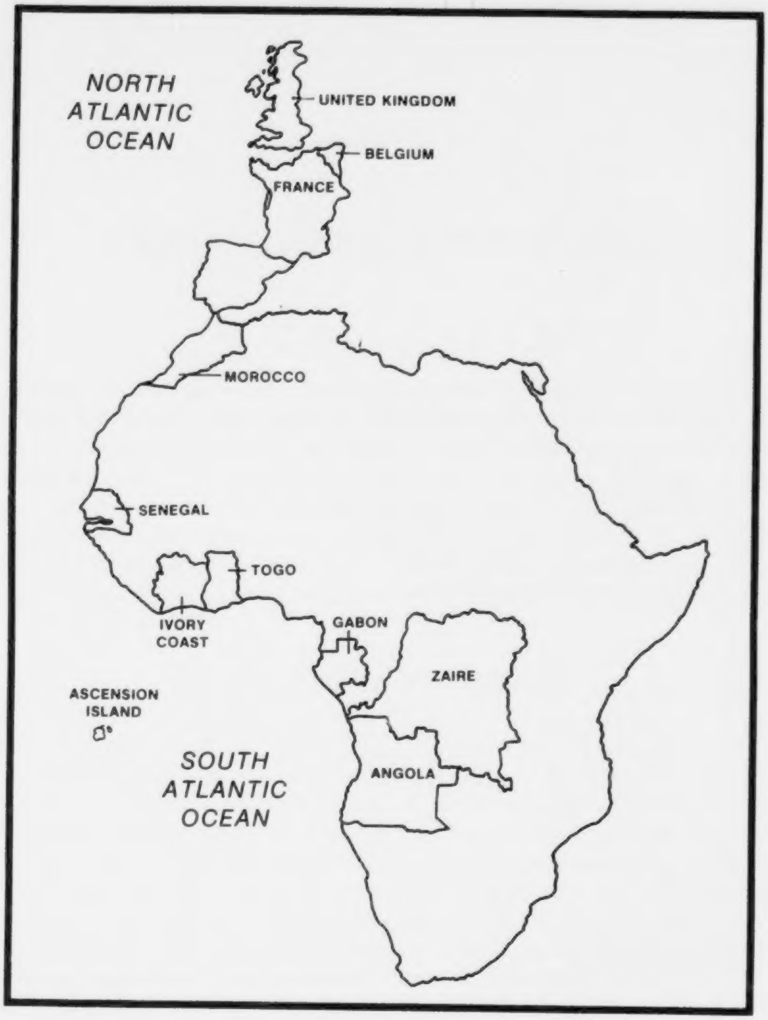
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
UNITED KINGDOM
BELGIUM
FRANCE
MOROCCO
SENEGAL
TOGO
IVORY COAST
GABON
ZAIRE
ASCENSION ISLAND
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
ANGOLA

Figure 17. Sub-Saharan Africa.

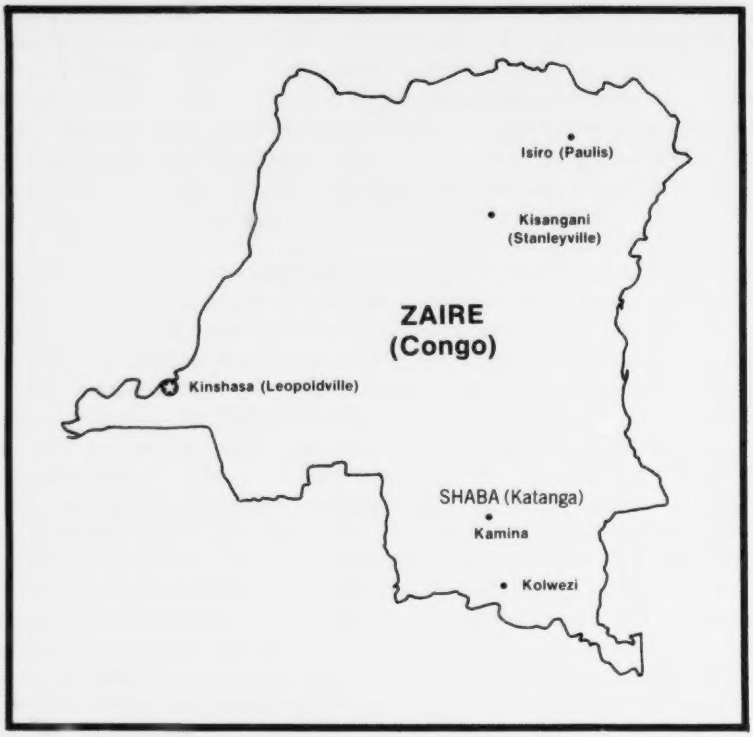

Figure 18. Zaire.

Before the summer of 1960 was over, Kasavubu and Lumumba had requested military aid from the United Nations to end the revolt by Tshombe. The black African members were very largely in favor of such aid, and the superpowers agreed to the deployment. No great power troops were permitted in the force, and its largest component came from India. Its first mission was to get between the contending forces and prevent further violence. Early in the fall, Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba; and Lumumba, along with his associate, Antoine Gizenga, set up a competing political force based around Stanleyville. The United States was supporting Kasavubu, and after Joseph Mobutu took over the army and became another major political power, America supported the Mobutu-Kasavubu combination. The United States was sending aid overtly through the United Nations and the other normal diplomatic channels and covertly through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).[2]

After the falling out between Kasavubu and Lumumba, a divergence in the policies of the two superpowers developed. The Belgian troops that had been dispatched to save their nationals in Katanga were threatening to also move through the rest of the country to restore order. Lumumba, echoed by the USSR, began shouting that it was all a plot to restore colonialism. The Soviets sent Lumumba some aid in the form of trucks, advisers, and 10 IL-18 transport aircraft. The UN forces prevailed, however, because they were able to dominate radio communications and the airport, negating the Soviet aid. Lumumba was captured by the forces of the central government and later handed over to the Katangese, who murdered him in February 1961.[3] It is worth remembering that these events were occurring during the US election campaign and the transition from one administration to another. Further, two other crises, those of the Bay of Pigs and Laos, were simultaneously moving toward climaxes.

Once the threat from Lumumba was removed, Kasavubu and Mobutu were still faced with the secessionist threat in Katanga—and similar ones that seemed to be arising in other provinces. Since the United States and the USSR had a common interest in putting down Tshombe, one would have thought that his fall would soon follow that of Lumumba. However, the NATO alliance was not altogether behind Tshombe's downfall, for the British and Belgian capitalists did not want to see the mining operations in Katanga disrupted. In fact, American opinion was not altogether united on the point. Though the new Kennedy administration wanted to win the favor of the new black African states, some Americans had economic interests in Katanga cobalt mining. The initial deployment for the UN force had stipulated that the objective was to preserve the peace, not to settle internal differences within the Congo state. In fact, Article 2, paragraph seven, of the UN Charter states: "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the member to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter."[4] Yet, notwithstanding the intent behind the deployment of the UN force, its very existence between the armies of the central government and those of Tshombe had the effect of making good the secession of the latter. Tshombe was at the time universally perceived by black Africa as a tool of the imperialists, and both superpowers, for their own reasons, did not want him to prevail. Consequently, the UN objective, after some thrashing around, was changed to the repression of the secession and the ejection of all foreign troops from the Congo. As most of the foreigners not in the UN forces were white mercenaries in the employ of Tshombe, that meant the decimation of his forces.[5]

Dag Hammarskjöld, then secretary general of the United Nations, journeyed to the Congo to talk with Tshombe during the fall of 1961 but was killed in an airplane crash before he could reach Katanga. The crisis dragged on and on through the rest of that year and all of the next. The total of the UN forces reached some 20,000 troops. U Thant, who replaced Hammarskjöld, requested more equipment and airlift support from the United States. The Department of State recommended to the Kennedy administration that not only should the requested aid be granted but also a squadron of fighters, manned by US pilots, should be dispatched to turn the tide in a hurry. Kennedy, hesitant just as he had been to supply US combat air support to the Bay of Pigs invasion, approved the equipment and airlift help but would not provide the firepower unless both the Congolese government and U Thant requested it. Neither was enthusiastic for it, but the rest of the aid proved to be enough, and the Katangese gave up the fight early in 1963.[6]

The UN forces remained on the scene until the next year, 1964, though the financial strain and the Soviet refusal to bear a share of it were bankrupting the UN treasury.[7] The disintegrative tendency reappeared in Zaire as soon as the UN forces were gone—an occurrence that soon resulted in another crisis.

The outcome of the Congo crisis of 1960–63 was generally favorable to the West. The Soviets did not yet possess either the power projection or the economic capabilities to compete successfully that far from their own periphery. The United States was as yet uninhibited by her sad experience in Vietnam. The peculiar situation permitted the white Americans to oppose the black Tshombe without alienating all of black Africa (and the growing US black vote). Further, because Tshombe was seen as the head of a colonialist movement, we even found the Soviets on our side from time to time. The Kasavubu-Mobutu combination, favored by the United States from the start, prevailed. In most cases, the persistence of favorable outcomes is not to be expected; but this was the exception to the rule, for as of 1985, Mobutu is still in control. He has generally been one of the few consistent friends the United States has had in black Africa—though his regime is perpetually shaky.[8]

Tshombe did not suffer too much, for he was soon back on the scene, this time as the premier of the central government. Many of his Katangese rebel supporters, though, were driven across the border into Angola, where they have been a source of anxiety ever since. The Lumumba-Gizenga group was not quite exterminated, and its remnants came back to cause another crisis in 1964, which we shall examine presently. The United Nations, though its treasury was badly bent, came out of the experience without too much damage to its prestige. However, it was pretty clear to all concerned that no effective deployment of a United Nations military force could ever take place unless *both* superpowers were for it. It also seems probable that the United Nations was weary of the Congo operation long before it ended and looked upon it as a bad experience, for there has been precious little tendency for the world organization to intervene again in any of the many African crises that have occurred since that time—three of them in the same arena.

Though the UN forces seem to have had a modicum of aerial firepower support, the main air power advantage was in airlift. The notion that the jungle terrain and the undeveloped river, rail, and road transportation of Africa puts a premium on airlift was well illustrated. The antiaircraft environment of the time was benign and there was no air-to-air threat, which further enhanced the ability of airlift to give the ground forces a mobility and logistics edge. At any rate, the situation seemed successfully stabilized at the onset of 1963; but within a year and a half or so, another Congo crisis was upon us.

DRAGON ROUGE: THE STANLEYVILLE CRISIS, 1964

As we have seen, the United Nations pulled out of the Congo in June 1964, but the political situation hadn't really been stabilized. Katanga Province (fig. 18) was quiet for the moment, but rebellions continued in the northeastern part of the country. President Kasavubu invited Moise Tshombe to return to Léopoldville to replace Cyrille Adoula as the premier in the hopes that he could bring a measure of unity to the country.[9] The United States was in something of a turmoil: President Kennedy had been assassinated, the Vietnam situation was moving toward the crisis of the Tonkin Gulf incident, and the presidential election campaign was under way with the aggressive Barry Goldwater accusing the incumbent, Lyndon B. Johnson, of being insufficiently firm in foreign affairs. France's President Charles de Gaulle was asserting himself in Europe, and the unity of the NATO alliance seemed less certain than it had been.

After Lumumba and Gizenga had set up a rebel regime, leadership eventually passed in turn to Christopher Gbenye who set up a Council of National Liberation as a basis for further insurrection against the central government. Gbenye's forces, after taking US and Belgian hostages, ultimately suffered a humiliating defeat by some 545 Belgian paratroopers supported by about a dozen US C-130s. Completely discredited, Gbenye and his troops could not recover, and the central government soon reestablished control.

The CIA had been supporting the Congolese central government covertly, and aid was also being sent by America in more open ways. Some T-28 trainers (fig. 19) modified into fighter-bomber configuration had been supplied in the spring, and they were followed that summer by some B-26s with much greater firepower than the T-28s possessed. The Congolese did not have pilots capable of flying them, of course, so they were manned by people recruited for the work by the CIA—some of them Cuban exiles from the Miami community.[10] There were also some H-21 helicopters, trainers, and 10 C-47 transports supplied to the fledgling air force, all

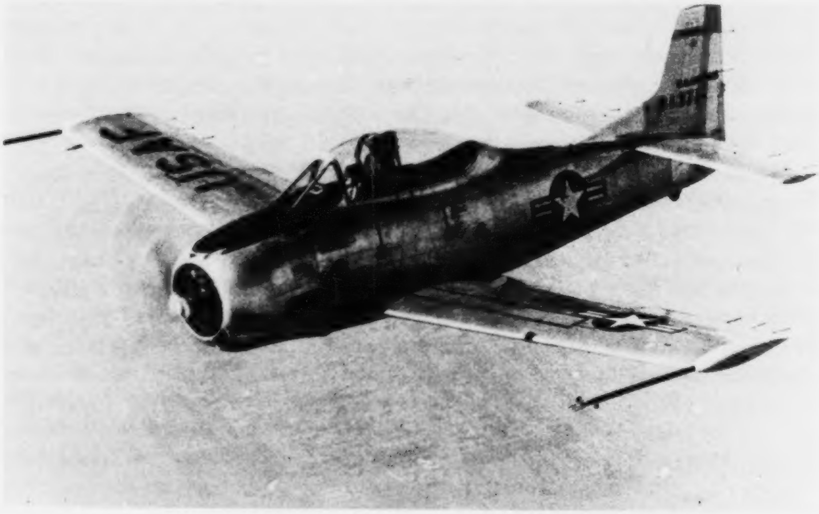

Figure 19. US Air Force T-28 Trojan.
(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

through the CIA. Belgian pilots and technicians were also involved in noncombat roles, and four C-130s were sent that were manned and maintained by Americans.

The Stanleyville crisis began during the summer of 1964 when rebels seized five members of the American consulate. One of their major reasons for doing so was to have hostages to inhibit the T-28 and B-26 attacks, which had been having a major impact on the insurrectionary forces.[11] Though the hostages certainly felt the urgency of the situation, the US response was not generated for several months. This was partly because information reaching Washington about the situation in Stanleyville was scarce indeed. For a long time, the only hostages were American, which meant that there was little interest among any of our allies for a joint operation. Finally, the simultaneous Tonkin Gulf crisis and the presidential election campaign drove the crisis off the front pages.

One result of Washington's delayed response was that there was more time for planning—and more time for a greater number of actors to become involved. In the fall, however, the rebels felt threatened by a force of mercenaries Tshombe had marching up from the south towards Stanleyville, and they took a large number of Belgians to serve as hostages.[12] This had the effect of greatly speeding up the Western response. The Johnson administration had been beleaguered enough by charges of imperialism arising from the situation in Vietnam without wishing to go it alone at Stanleyville. Once the Belgians became directly involved, the prospect of a joint operation using American air power and Belgian troops to carry out a clearly *humanitarian* mission opened up. Further, the insurgents had added an American medical doctor, Paul Carlson, to their bag of hostages and were accusing him of espionage and threatening to execute him—a situation that increased the pressure for early action.[13]

Neither the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (in a formal way), nor Strike Command (which had geographical jurisdiction for Stanleyville) had a decisive role in planning for the rescue operation that came to be known as "Dragon Rouge." In fact, President Johnson called in a man who normally had nothing to do with African affairs or military planning, Averell Harriman. It was a classical example of the impact of the "bureaucratic politics" model of decision making. The important thing to Johnson was neither the situation in the Congo nor the contingency options that his organizations had prepared to overcome it. He was in the midst of the election campaign and had so many problems in Southeast Asia that he sought out a political stalwart, Harriman, to keep the lid on things in the Congo to make sure that it did not become an embarrassment in the final days of the campaign. Harriman took his station in the State Department and presided over the planning that evolved from midsummer until the mission was flown in November.[14]

The insurgents in Stanleyville having added the Belgians and Dr Carlson to their bag and the mercenary column approaching from the south precipitated action. The detailed planning for the rescue mission was done in Belgium, where the United States sent some of its NATO personnel, led by Air Force Brig Gen Russell Dougherty, to cooperate. The scheme that emerged was to use some Belgian paratroopers delivered to the Stanleyville airport at first light by a dozen or so US Air Force C-130s deployed from Europe. The mission would start from Evereux, France, pick up the troops in Belgium, refuel at Moron AB in Spain, and proceed on to the staging base at Ascension Island in the South Atlantic, a British possession (fig. 17). Secrecy was at a premium, of course, and it was difficult to maintain given the number of foreign countries involved. In those days, one could hope that the sparsity of insurgent communications would aid in the preservation of secrecy, though that advantage has been waning ever since the days of Dragon Rouge. From Ascension Island, the force was either to stage further through an airfield a couple of hundred miles south of Stanleyville or, if the urgency of the situation in the Congo so required, make the insertion direct from the Ascension base. B-26s from the central government, flown by Cubans, would be available as weather scouts at the time of the initial strike, and fire support was also envisioned from that source. A thirteenth C-130, specially equipped with communications gear, was assigned to the force, which would rendezvous with the B-26s immediately prior to the drop time. The on-scene commander aboard would then make the final decision on execution.[15]

The first wave was to drop its troops and equipment over the Stanleyville airport; then the second wave was to land the armored jeeps. All five of the initial-wave C-130s made it to the drop zone in good order and delivered the force, which suffered only three injuries in the jumps and no combat casualties—though the airplanes did collect some bullet holes. The field was secured and cleared according to plan, and the rest of the fleet came in on schedule—except for one of the planes that was about an hour late getting off. Unfortunately, that was one of the aircraft carrying the armored jeeps, which delayed the move from the airfield to the town. It was during that delay that the insurrectionaries massacred some of the white hostages—though not the Americans. Nonetheless, most of the prisoners, including all five of the American consular personnel, were recovered unharmed—though doubtless fully terrorized. They were quickly evacuated, and the Belgian-American force did not tarry at Stanleyville. Soon afterward, Tshombe's force, led by mercenaries, arrived and scattered the rebels, a blow from which they never recovered. Tshombe, however, was never forgiven for the use of white mercenaries by either the rest of black Africa or the Communist world.[16]

The Westerners at Stanleyville were not the only ones in the Congo. Others were scattered at various locations throughout the land. One of the inhibitors for the rescue mission was the fear that its very success would stimulate massacres of whites at other locations. The mission to Stanleyville, as we have seen, provoked a storm of protest around the world, and the decision makers in both Belgium and the United States put a premium on the rapid withdrawal of the force to preserve its humanitarian character—and image. The problem with most of the rest of the endangered whites was that they were not concentrated in one place or a few places as had been those in Stanleyville. Further, the element of surprise was already lost. The humiliations suffered by the rebels at Stanleyville left them hoping for revenge. In fact, it was later shown that the news coming out of Stanleyville had caused the insurrectionaries further east to massacre some of the whites in that area. The Belgian paratroopers could not be recycled before the 26th, but on that day (just 48 hours after the initial rescue) they were inserted into the airfield at Paulis, a town somewhat over 200 miles northeast of Stanleyville. General Dougherty and his

Belgian counterparts had planned several possible options for actions after the first rescue, but the massacre reports being received indicated Paulis as the next objective, and as it turned out, the last one.

The drops at Paulis were made in a competent way; one paratrooper was wounded on the way down and the C-130s took several hits, but none were put out of action. This time, the troopers did not wait for the jeeps or the clearing of the field but immediately marched on the town. Some murders had already been committed in response to the rescue at Stanleyville, but nearly 400 whites were evacuated by C-130s using the 4,200-foot dirt runway at Paulis. No further missions were possible at that point because the rest of the whites were insufficiently concentrated or their whereabouts were unknown, suitable landing fields were not available, and the heat on the international scene was becoming too intense. The Belgian-American force was soon withdrawn from the Congo, and the freed prisoners were taken back to their homelands.[17]

Though Dr Paul Carlson, several other Americans, and many other whites were massacred during the fall of 1964, many have claimed that the Dragon Rouge mission was a clear success. Skeptics in the third and communist worlds have asserted that more lives were lost because of the rescue effort than would have been sacrificed had it never been attempted. The US ambassador to the United Nations insisted at the time that 2,000 people had been saved as a result of the mission.[18] Around 200 Europeans were killed,[19] and some sources assert that 20,000 Congolese were murdered by the insurgents in a massive bloodbath.[20] No airplanes and very few troopers were lost. Much verbal abuse was heaped upon both the Belgians and the Americans, but it would be hard to demonstrate that the mission caused any real damage to the national interests of either. The government in Belgium gained a good deal of credit with its own people, at least. Tshombe did not make out as well. He did succeed in putting down most of the resistance to the central government, but that was not much appreciated by his colleagues and he was dispensed with the next year. He was condemned forever in the eyes of the black Africans for again employing, successfully, the white mercenaries from South Africa and elsewhere. At least, the combination of events that year did not destabilize the Western-oriented regime in the Congo, which has survived up to the present day.

The use of land-based air power in the crisis of 1964 was impressive. No American nor Belgian firepower unit was employed, but the T-28s and B-26s supplied to the Tshombe government had effects disproportionate to the size and modernity of the force. Both the threat of use and the actual application of firepower seem to have had important impacts on the decisions of the rebel leaders. The use of land-based airlift aircraft in both a strategic and a tactical mode demonstrated its range and flexibility. The force was moved thousands of miles from Belgium to the Congo but achieved surprise against the rebels in Stanleyville—notwithstanding that it had to move through the airspace of several countries and that many people knew of the operation. The paratroopers were successfully landed and extracted at two locations without undue losses, and they did achieve their assigned mission. This use of US airlift assets and Belgian paratroopers in combined operations, and particularly without the benefit of prior field training, clearly highlighted the inherent flexibility of land-based aircraft. The airlift also demonstrated the responsiveness of land-based aircraft at the close of the mission when it was able to get the last of the force out of the country on 29 November, just five days after the commencement of the rescue. This was in response to the storm of criticism to which the United States and Belgium were being subjected by all manner of adversaries.

The use of US land-based aircraft and Belgian airborne troops may have contributed to an unintended outcome of far greater consequence than the rescue of hostages. Specifically, it appears that the rescue may have established conditions that led to the downfall of the rebel regime that controlled Stanleyville and much of the northeastern province in which the city is located. The situation in the Congo remained rather settled until 1977.

SHABA I, 1977

The 1977 crisis in Shaba Province of Zaire is hardly distinct from the one of the following year, Shaba II, and is more distantly related to Moise Tshombe's attempt to take Katanga Province (now Shaba) out of the Congolese state (now Zaire) in 1960 (fig. 18). After the defeat of the rebel insurgency in the eastern Congo in 1964–65, the situation in Mobutu's state was never exactly what might be described as stable. The most that could be asserted is that the situation was less unstable for a season. Mineral production was rising and a relative peace prevailed in the land. Until the mid-1970s, copper prices were rising, and that product was the core of the Zairian economy.

Mobutu made an attempt to develop a kind of national consciousness among the diverse tribes over which he presided. He imposed name changes on places and people to give them a more clearly African character—thus the Congo became Zaire, Joseph Mobutu became Mobutu Sese Seko, and Léopoldville became Kinshasa. Mobutu's government was monumentally inefficient and corrupt, and his Army was no better. The officers robbed the soldiers of their pay, and the soldiers, having to live, robbed the populace they were supposed to be protecting. To make matters worse, Mobutu actually made the soldiery even more incompetent by purging those officers who seemed capable of posing a personal threat to the dictator—and they, unfortunately, tended to be the most effective leaders.[21]

Many of the defeated rebels who had fought for Tshombe in the early sixties in Katanga fled across the border to Angola where they set up their homes and lived largely by subsistence farming. They were not much subject to the control of *any* government because they melded well with ethnically related natives of the area. The region was remote and inaccessible, and for a long time the Portuguese rulers of Angola and their successors had too many more threatening problems to give the expatriates much attention. Many of the Katangese exiles sided with the Soviet-backed faction in the Angolan guerrilla war against the Portuguese and later against the two factions backed variously by the United States, the People's Republic of China, and South Africa. Until 1976, this kept many of them too busy to give much thought to making life difficult for Mobutu. Naturally, the latter sent his own aid to the factions on the other side—those backed by states other than the USSR. His soldiers did not distinguish themselves in those operations, and the costs did nothing to rebuild the Zairian economy. Thus, Mobutu's enemies were fighting at the side of the Cuban forces and those of the Soviet favorite, Dr Agostinho Neto. Against Neto were the troops from white-dominated South Africa, which did no good for Mobutu's standing among the black Africans because of the guilt assigned through association. Once the Cubans had saved the day for Neto and combat in Angola had subsided, the exiled Katangese were freed for other activities.[22] All that happened in 1975 and 1976.

Meanwhile, events on the international economics scene were combining with the outcome in Angola to further complicate Mobutu's life. The Arab-Israeli crisis of 1973 had worldwide political and economic repercussions. The crisis had deadly effects in Zaire as in other parts of the third world that did not enjoy sufficient oil deposits of their own. But the impact on Zaire was particularly devastating. The great rise in oil prices was combined with a nearly simultaneous drop in world copper prices. The hurt was magnified by the toll taken from the economy by administrative and military corruption. Thus, in the economic as well as the political and military senses, the status of Mobutu's Zaire took a decided turn for the worse.[23]

Ever since the death of Lumumba, USSR policy had been solidly against Zaire and the United States had more or less supported her. By the late seventies, however, the Americans and the rest of the West, especially the financial community, were beginning to despair about Zaire's future. The economy was shaky, the external debt was immense, and there seemed little prospect of turning things around. The West was trying to impose political and military reforms on the Zairian government as a condition of a commitment to refinance the national debt.

The Democratic Carter administration came into power in the United States at the onset of 1977 with new notions of foreign policy that downplayed the importance of the East-West conflict in favor of that said to be growing between North and South. Further, it seemed to have a greater concern for the cultivation of good relations with black Africa and was more allied with the domestic black vote than was the preceding Republican administration. The American revulsion at the thought of any foreign intervention—arising from the bad experience in Vietnam—was still profound, but was, perhaps, beginning to wane a bit. Angola had recently reached the climax of the struggle for postcolonial leadership there and, as we shall see, the Soviet client came out on top even though it could hardly claim to have a popular majority on its side. Nor could the Soviets have hoped to win without the overt combat aid of Cuban troops. The Cuban participation was so prominent that notwithstanding its North-South theories, the Carter administration could not deny the hand of the East in the outcome.

Hardly two months after Jimmy Carter had been inaugurated, Zaire's border was crossed by invaders based in northern Angola. They made their approach on a broad front, taking various villages while marching in the general direction of Kolwezi, an important mining center where many Europeans and a few Americans resided. The main force of Mobutu's army was not in the region, but the force that was deployed there was not beloved by the local populace. It did not put up anything resembling a fight, and the invaders found little impeding their march.[24]

As usual, the data coming out of Shaba was sketchy and subject to distortion as it passed through channels. Mobutu appealed to the West for aid and, naturally, was quick to see Communist Cuban and Soviet participation in the invasion. By contrast, the Carter administration did not see Cuban or Soviet influence to any great extent but it favored quick resolution before the situation became a test of strength between East and West. United States goals, however, were quite ambitious in that they called for containment of the incursion and restoration of political stability.[25] As for the Belgians, they were disillusioned with their colonial experience and had little desire to get involved again except to rescue endangered countrymen. The Belgians and the French also understood the undesirability of deploying white troops to the region, whatever their mission, if that could be avoided.[26]

The Carter administration tended to view it as an African problem and was seemingly reluctant to grant that there was any Cuban involvement; thus it would send only material aid and would do so only in a very inconspicuous way. Most of the aid was of a noncombat character, and it was sent in aboard MAC contract carrier Boeing 747 and DC-8 aircraft belonging to World Airways.[27] Of course, there was no chance that the United States would send troops. Vietnam was too recent and, besides, there was no perception that vital interests were involved, nor was there any desire to have American troops firing on black Africans for the sake of rescuing whites around Kolwezi—or as the third world rhetoric would certainly have painted it, for the sake of white mining interests there.

The French involvement in Shaba I was only a little less reserved than the American. Moroccan troops, 1,500 of them, were recruited for the task of making Kolwezi secure for Mobutu, and the French brought them to the scene aboard their own (French) aircraft. Morocco's King Hassan was interested in winning the favor of the West, for he was (and is) engaged in a struggle with Algeria over the rule of the former Spanish Sahara. He hoped to get the support of the West against Algeria and could offer sturdy, battle-tested troops who would not be perceived by the third world as whites. Fortunately, the rebels had not taken the city of Kolwezi when the Moroccans arrived, and it was possible to air land them there without opposition. The invaders scattered, some to Angola and some into the bush, as soon as they knew that the Moroccans had come to spearhead an offensive for the Zairian army and no real fighting was necessary.[28]

Shaba I, then, may be perceived as a model for a successful stabilization operation through the use of air power in its airlift mode. It enabled the central government to pose a realistic threat of force to its adversary early in the crisis; a modest number of troops and the expenditure of airlift resources sufficed to effect the desired behavior change among the rebels. Of course, such measures could not get at the root of Zaire's troubles, so the insurgents who ran away lived to fight another day.

SHABA II, 1978

The new day came in the spring of 1978. Though Dr Neto's warriors had won in Angola some time before, they still had not been able to put down the resistance in many parts of the country. Dr Neto was sure some of his opposition was being aided from Zaire, and, therefore, did little to repress the anti-Mobutu rebels within the borders of his own country. Though the short time between the Neto-Cuban-Soviet victory in Angola and the mounting of the Shaba I invasion in 1977 was enough to arouse the suspicions of Cuban involvement in the latter, the Carter administration said that it did not have evidence of that. When the same group of insurgents came back in May of 1978, the massive Cuban and Soviet intervention in Ethiopia had occurred and become well known. This, combined with more signals that the Cubans were helping the Katangese exiles, tended to set the stage for a stronger Western response to Shaba II than had been the case with the earlier crisis.[29]

In Shaba II, the invaders concentrated their attack on the objective of Kolwezi (fig. 18) and quickly captured it. Because the white foreigners were concentrated there and because its capture also posed a greater threat to the continued operation of the mines than had Shaba I, Western interests were more seriously engaged than they had been in 1977. Though one could hardly call those interests "vital," and though there still were strong inhibitions against forceful intervention overseas, the decision makers were concerned enough to consider the use of force, at least to the point of alerting elements of the 82d Airborne Division for possible deployment.[30]

The Zairian army again folded despite the fact that Mobutu had deployed his most trusted, elite division to the province in the aftermath of Shaba I and had made efforts to improve its training and morale. The rebels had a walk-in, and, unfortunately for them, discipline broke down among them once they had conquered the city. They went on a campaign of rape and pillage that had the dual effects of stimulating a more vigorous response than might have come otherwise and at the same time weakening their own capability to meet it. However, they were careful enough to take the airport and to burn what airplanes they found there.[31]

Mobutu's diplomacy was more successful than his warmaking. He again appealed for help from the West. For its part, the United States had suffered an erosion of its presidential credibility at home and abroad as a consequence of Shaba I, and intended to send a clear signal to the USSR and Cuba, in particular, and to all of Africa and the Middle East in general. Since Western foreign nationals, including some Americans, appeared to be in some danger, the United States, Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom began contingency planning for a possible rescue operation.[32] Two infantry battalions from the 82d Airborne Division were placed on alert for possible deployment and 18 C-141 aircraft (fig. 20) were provided for movement of French and Belgian troops and material into Shaba. Between 16 and 27 May, these aircraft transported 850 tons of cargo and 125 passengers, while flying a total of 32 missions. Starting on 31 May, the C-141s began the redeployment of French and Belgian troops and, simultaneously, provided airlift support for the deployment to Zaire of an African peacekeeping force consisting of 1,500 Moroccan troops and others from Senegal, Togo, Gabon, and the Ivory Coast (fig. 17). In all instances, the airlift deployments terminated in noncombat areas to assure compliance with the War Powers Resolution.[33]

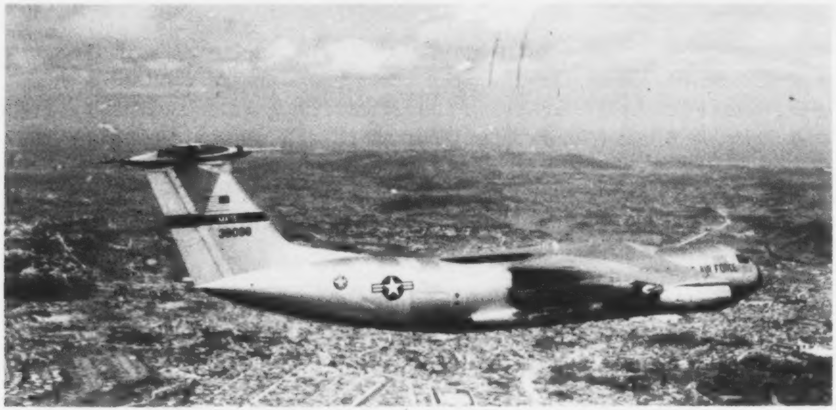

Figure 20. US Air Force C-141 Starlifter. Between 16 and 27 May, 18 of these aircraft transported 850 tons of cargo and 125 passengers, while flying a total of 32 missions.

(Photo Credit: Official USAF Photo)

The French responded with the deployment of 700 men of the Foreign Legion who had been stationed at Corsica. They were transported by French aircraft, but their equipment came aboard the US C-141s. The Belgians sent along a larger number of paratroopers—1,171 men—and they were carried to Zaire aboard Belgian aircraft, though this force, too, received logistical support from the US Air Force C-141s. Like the Stanleyville operation of 1964, neither deployment could take the direct, overland route because of overflight problems and, consequently, had to approach the objective area by a circuitous route over the Atlantic. The Belgians arrived at Kamina, their staging base in Zaire, on the afternoon of 19 May 1978, five days after they first learned that Kolwezi had fallen. The French Legionnaires, staging through Kinshasa, had arrived on the previous day and were making their jumps into Kolwezi as the Belgians were arriving at Kamina (fig 18). They made their jumps from three C-160s of the French air force and four C-130s belonging to the Zairians. There was not much organized resistance to the drops, and the paratroopers suffered only a few injuries.[34]

Meanwhile, the Zairian army recaptured the Kolwezi airfield from the rebels (the French drop zones had been in undeveloped areas on the northeastern and northwestern fringes of the city), and it had become possible for the Belgians to be air landed instead of being dropped. The coordination between the French, the Belgians, and the Zairians in the first days seems to have been wanting. The Belgians, having landed at the airfield unopposed at daybreak on the 20th, soon after were spectators as the remainder of the French Legionnaires jumped into the elephant grass a few miles to the northeast. Fortunately, the opposition in their drop zone was light, for their procedure was certainly much more hazardous than a landing at the friendly airfield would have been. Shortly after the drops, the French commander landed at the airport, and the needed coordination was accomplished in a meeting with his Zairian and Belgian counterparts. The agreement was that the

Belgians would organize the evacuation of the civilians and take over the maintenance of the public order in Kolwezi. The French and the Zairians were assigned the task of securing the villages surrounding the city. Though some murders had occurred before and during the landings of the Europeans, the remaining tasks were carried out with dispatch and without much more bloodshed. About 2,000 Europeans were rescued and the French and Belgian troops were removed from Kolwezi by mid-June when they were replaced by the African peacekeeping force sent to maintain order.[35] The French force was carried back to Corsica on some of the 18 US Air Force C-141s that had been participating in the operation.

Though Shaba II had not been carried out as quickly or with as much secrecy as had Shaba I (or the Stanleyville rescue of 1964), the outcome was nonetheless favorable from the French, Belgian, and Zairian points of view. About 130 Europeans, indeed, did die, and the rate of killing was reported to have increased once the rebels had heard of the coming rescue attempt, but 2,000 whites were rescued. Though the professed objective of the invaders had been to topple Mobutu and not to separate Shaba from the rest of Zaire, neither the French nor the Belgians wanted to be committed to supporting his continued rule. Yet, their successful rescue attempt had that outcome, for the act of restoring order in southern Zaire had the by-product of preserving the state and its ruler. Likewise, the African peacekeeping force deployed to Shaba by US land-based air power as replacements for the French and Belgian troops certainly contributed to the stability of the central government.

For the United States, the airlift deployment demonstrated the utility of US land-based air power in many ways. One of them was its usefulness as a signaling device. The employment of US C-141 aircraft (rather than the contract carriers used in Shaba I) sent a clear signal to the Soviets and the Cubans that US acquiescence in such Communist adventures as Angola and Ethiopia had its limits. To its existing and potential friends in the third world, the United States conveyed by action that it would spend money and take risks to support them.[36]

Beyond any doubt, the deployment of troops to Shaba clearly modified the behavior of the invading forces. They were repulsed by French and Belgian troops supported by US land-based aircraft. In this respect, it is significant that neither the French nor the Belgians were capable of conducting the long-range operation on their own; and thus, the use of US air power, with its power projection potential, became an essential element in resolving the crisis. Moreover, one should not ignore the combined nature of the Shaba II operation. Like the Stanleyville rescue of 1964, Shaba II demonstrated the responsiveness and flexibility of US airlift capability when tasked to function in a combined military operation.

Finally, the use of US land-based air power contributed to the termination of the conflict on terms generally favorable to Zaire, Belgium, France, and the United States. The invading forces were repulsed and stability restored. The outcome appears all the better for the United States since it did not employ its combat troops or armed aircraft. The inherent flexibility of land-based aircraft permitted insertion of troops, equipment, and support personnel at locations deemed most advisable by

US authorities. Not until hostilities were terminated did US aircraft deploy the African peacekeeping force into what had been the combat zone, thus demonstrating the flexibility of land-based air power when used to achieve objectives established by US policymakers.

NOTES

CHAPTER 6

1. Stephen R. Weissman, "Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences," *Political Science Quarterly* 52 (Summer 1979): 265–66; Frederick Hartmann, *The Relations of Nations* (New York: Random House, 1970), 81–85; Louis J. Halle, *The Cold War as History* (NewYork: Harper and Row, 1962), 382–88.

2. Weissman, "Covert Action," 263–70; Fred E. Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge: The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980), 5–14.

3. Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945–1966* (New York: Wiley, 1967), 241–42; John G. Stoessinger, *The United Nations and the Superpowers*, 2d ed. (New York: Random House, 1970), 81–83.

4. Norman J. Padelford and George A. Lincoln, *The Dynamics of International Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 579.

5. Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge*, 7–14; John Spanier, *Games Nations Play: Analyzing International Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1978), 300–3; Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 199–200.

6. Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Bantam, 1965), 716–19.

7. Spanier, *Games Nations Play*, 303. At the time, the United States criticized the USSR's refusal to pay up, but later began to see the futility in complaining and the possible good in accepting it as a precedent. As the third world became ever more able to dominate the General Assembly and as the West's majority on the Security Council became more unstable, the establishment of the principle that a superpower could not be assessed to help pay for an operation it deemed against its national interests became a more desirable thing.

8. Thomas Turner, "Mobutu's Zaire: Permanently on the Verge of Collapse," *Current History* 80 (March 1981): 124–28.

9. Robert Emerson, *Africa and the United States Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 66.

10. Hartmann, *Relations of Nations*, 546–47; Weissman, "Covert Action," 270–72; Emerson, *Africa and US Policy*, 66–69.

11. M. Crawford Young, "Rebellion and the Congo," in Robert I. Rotberg and Ali A. Mazuri, *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: Oxford, 1970), 974.

12. Irving Kaplan, ed., *Zaire: A Country Study* (Washington: American University, 1978), 54.

13. Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge*, 40, 43, 82, 121–27.

14. Ibid., 22–23.

15. Ibid., 137–64.

16. Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge*, 177–96; John K. Cooley, *East Wind Over Africa* (New York: Walker, 1965), 117–21; Kaplan, *Zaire: A Country Study*, 52–54.

17. Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge*, 183–93; Young, "Rebellion and the Congo," 974–75; Emerson, *Africa and US Policy*, 66–68.

18. Emerson, *Africa and US Policy*, 67.

19. Kaplan, *Zaire*, 54.

20. Cooley, *East Wind*, 120.

21. Kaplan, *Zaire*, 247–60; F. Scott Bobb, "Another Rescue Operation," *Africa Report* (March–April 1979), 16–20.

22. Kaplan, *Zaire*, 59; Peter Mangold, "Shaba I and Shaba II," *Survival* 21 (May–June 1979): 107–15.

23. Gen Bruce Palmer, Jr, "US Security Interests and Africa South of the Sahara," *American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Defense Review* 2 (1978): 15–16.

24. Maj Gen Henri J. G. Depoorter, Belgian Army, "Kolwezi," *Military Review* 54 (September, 1979): 30; Kaplan, *Zaire*, 59, 67; Turner "Mobutu's Zaire," 124–28.

25. Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 70–71.

26. Kaplan, *Zaire*, 248; Mangold, "Shaba I and II," 109.

27. Col Edward B. Sleeper, "Zaire Airlift: Another Perspective," *Airlift Operations Review* 3 (October–December 1981): 22. Though the goods were brought in aboard civilian aircraft with civilian crews, a few American military men were involved in facilitating the turnaround at the offloading end of things in Zaire. They were personnel attached to the American Embassy in Kinshasa.

28. Mangold, "Shaba I and II," 110; Kaplan, *Zaire*, 262.

29. Mangold, in "Shaba I and II," 109, says that the CIA was reporting that the Cubans were training the insurgents right up until their invasion of May 1978, but there was room to doubt their involvement. As always, the perception is as important as the reality, and the fact that the CIA thought that the involvement was there, probably indicates that the Carter administration was acting accordingly. See also Jon Krauss, "American Foreign Policy in Africa," *Current History* 80 (March 1981): 99.

30. Lt Col Jaques Hatte, French army, "Kolwezi: An Airborne Assault," *Infantry* 59 (September 1979): 25.

31. Hatte, "Kolwezi," 25, Mangold, "Shaba I and II," 111; Depoorter, "Kolwezi," 30; Sleeper, "Zaire Airlift," 24.

32. Vance, *Hard Choices*, 89.

33. House Committee on International Relations, *Congressional Oversight of War Powers Compliance: Zaire Airlift*, 95th Cong., 2d sess., 10 August 1978, 16, 19, 30, and 33; Mangold, "Shaba I and II," 112.

34. Hatte, "Kolwezi," 26–27; Depoorter, "Kolwezi," 32–33.

35. Kaplan, *Zaire*, 266–68; Hatte, "Kolwezi," 26–29; Depoorter, "Kolwezi," 33–35; Mangold, "Shaba I and II," 111.

36. Mangold, "Shaba I and II," 111–112; Kraus, "American Foreign Policy in Africa," 99–100.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS: LIMITATIONS AND CAPABILITIES OF AIR POWER IN THIRD WORLD CRISES

Land-based aircraft were employed in widely differing roles in each of the crises we have studied, thus permitting examination of their unique characteristics and capabilities in a variety of circumstances. The case studies, therefore, permit one to judge the utility and limitations of land-based aircraft when employed for discrete political purposes. Finally, the case studies provide an aggregate view of crises that, in turn, tends to yield some strategic considerations and conceptual implications for the future use of land-based air power in third world crises.

CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES

In each of our crises, the dominant characteristics of land-based air power appeared to be its range and relative speed. In the Yom Kippur War, US land-based aircraft traversed 7,000 miles in a matter of hours to deliver, among other things, new electronic countermeasures (ECM) equipment, desperately required by the Israeli air force (IAF), and Maverick missiles, the employment of which brought vociferous complaints from Anwar Sadat. For the Stanleyville operation, US land-based aircraft traveled a comparable distance, staging through Ascension Island in the middle of the South Atlantic in order to execute a successful airborne assault with Belgian troops. Ascension became necessary, of course, because of overflight restrictions elsewhere; but perhaps the more instructive observation is that the range of land-based aircraft permitted the execution of an option desired by the president, lack of overflight notwithstanding. In the *Mayaguez* crisis, marines were airlifted swiftly some 2,000 miles from their base in Okinawa to U Tapao in Thailand. From there, they deployed to Koh Tang Island, engaged in combat for a full day, and were redeployed to their home base before other troops arrived in the crisis area by surface means. For the landings on the shore of the Bay of Pigs, things were stretched too far. The light bombers and airlifters were providing tactical air support all the way from Nicaragua, fully 500 miles away. This so limited the time over the target that Castro's forces, with bases less than 100 miles away, had a substantial advantage.

Although air power's range capability is singularly impressive, its real potential is realized only when integrated into a comprehensive and near-global routing network. On a daily basis, US land-based aircraft travel these routes and thus ensure a high level of flight crew competence and an efficient support infrastructure. The routing mechanism is durable and flexible. In addition to providing support for the longer-range airlift assets, it also serves the needs of tactical aircraft. Fighter, reconnaissance, and other similar land-based aircraft routinely are deployed from continent to continent and hemisphere to hemisphere via this same route infrastructure. Indeed, the F-4 Phantoms and A-4 Skyhawks deployed to Israel during the Yom Kippur crisis were supported by this infrastructure. Given its existence and efficiency, the infrastructure responds to crises with dispatch and tends to view crisis deployments as a slight deviation rather than a major change in operating procedures and practices.

The *Mayaguez* incident demonstrated the great value of having substantial bases near the scene of the crisis; the Bay of Pigs fiasco contrasts by showing how the power of tactical units can be eroded by the absence of bases near the action. Of course, aircraft carriers can compensate somewhat for the want of bases in some places, but the possible crisis sites are many, the ships are few, and it is hard to have the latter in the right place at the right time. By the time the *Coral Sea* got to the area of the *Mayaguez*, the issue had been decided—even though the carrier had been inbound to Australia at the time the crisis occurred. Too, in many crises, the force requirements at the outset are far less than they become as time wears on, and this can reduce the utility of the carrier bases.

Our case studies further suggest that the payload capability of land-based aircraft, although far less than that of surface transportation, may be ideally suited for crises. Given our definition of a crisis, one moves toward resolution by reducing the level of uncertainty. Executing a deliberate action as part of a conflict behavior pattern, and doing so in a manner that minimizes ambiguity, obviously would be preferable in the interactions that characterize a crisis. In the Yom Kippur War, US land-based aircraft airlifted the relatively modest sum of 22.5 tons of material, about 60 percent of which arrived after the cease-fire or after the arrival of the first ship But when put into the context of a crisis, the total amount airlifted before the cease-fire is not of major significance. Of vital importance in the interactions that characterized this crisis, however, were the arrival at Lod airport of the first aircraft within 24 hours of the decision to begin the airlift and the steady stream of land-based aircraft that arrived thereafter. Indeed, the disgorging of artillery pieces, munitions, aircraft parts, and similar items from land-based aircraft on a sustained basis early in this crisis interaction may have exerted widespread influence far out of proportion to the gross weight of the material. As Golda Meir put it, the beginning of the airlift not only lifted the spirits of the Israelis, but it "served to make the American position clear to the Soviet Union."

By way of contrast, when the *Houston* and the *Río Escondido* were sunk by Castro's aircraft, he won the logistical battle. Though it seems that the exiles inflicted far more casualties on the Cuban militia than they suffered themselves, the airlift could not make up for the loss of the ships. Clearly, Castro was able to service the battle at a far greater rate than was possible for his enemies. Proper interdiction of the ingress routes *might* have made a difference. Just a few years later, more modern airlift forces were able to sustain a much larger force at Khe Sanh against much more fearsome opposition than any the Cuban dictator could offer—albeit over a much shorter distance and with complete air superiority.

Also clearly evident from the case studies are the responsiveness and flexibility of land-based aircraft and the advantage that these two capabilities provide US decision makers. In the Yom Kippur crisis, for example, the United States deliberately delayed initiation of its airlift for several days. Although the exact reasons for the delay remain unclear, it is quite possible that US decision makers felt no sense of urgency, in large part because they were confident that within 24 to 48 hours of an execute order, aircraft would be arriving in Israel. Even the start of a massive Soviet airlift on the 9th or 10th of October did not force the US hand. The United States did execute on the 13th and made explicit its aim of exceeding the Soviet effort, a goal that it achieved easily. At the end of the airlifts, the United States had carried about one-third more tonnage in one-half as many sorties as the Soviets while traveling 10 times the distance. Numbers aside, the important point is that in the world of crises, where one objective is to lessen the level of unpredictability, the responsiveness and flexibility of US land-based air power in the Yom Kippur crisis enabled policymakers to demonstrate their level of commitment and, moreover, to do so at a time they deemed most appropriate.

The better demonstration of flexibility is provided by Castro's use of air power. It is not at all farfetched to argue that just four single-engine aircraft operating out of San Antonio de los Baños turned the tide before much larger surface forces were fairly engaged. Two Sea Furies decimated the exile logistical system by sinking two ships and scaring off the rest, and two trainers maintained the air superiority that made that possible and prevented the enemy from interdicting Castro's logistics. All this was achieved without detailed knowledge of the enemy's invasion plan or any idea of the point of attack. That US air power was affecting Castro's thinking seems clear enough, for he instructed his fliers not to fire upon *any* US airplanes and to disengage were such sighted. Some Navy A-4s were present over international waters on D-day, and the Cuban pilots did indeed obey their rules of engagement—which suggests more noncombat uses of both sea-based and land-based air power that add to their flexibility.

Further evidence of land-based air power's responsiveness and flexibility is offered by the series of crises in Africa. In the Stanleyville rescue operation of 1964, for example, US election-year politics complicated the decision-making process in Washington, thus placing greater demands for immediate responsiveness on those who might be tasked eventually to execute a military option. President Johnson, while running for reelection, had to contend with several major issues aside from the Congo. With regard to Vietnam, approximately 16,000 US troops already had been deployed, an additional 5,000 were being considered, and the Tonkin Gulf incident had occurred.

On the domestic scene, race issues surfaced with riots in New Jersey and the discovery of the bodies of slain civil-rights workers. Given these latter events, black Africa became an extremely delicate problem for the President. Therefore, he appointed W. Averell Harriman at the outset of the Stanleyville crisis to manage the situation, presumably until after the election. After the polls closed, it also became clear to the Belgian government that their personnel were being held hostage as well. When firsthand accounts of atrocities occurring in the Congo reached the Western press, the use of military force became not only a viable option but an urgent one. A rescue effort emerged as the preferred option, and it quickly became apparent that only land-based air power possessed the required degree of responsiveness and flexibility to conduct such an operation. Thus, events that had simmered for three full months by political choice now demanded the swift military action that could only be provided by land-based air power.

The most significant aspect of land-based air power's flexibility, however, is found in the nature of the Stanleyville rescue mission. With negligible notice, precious little planning, and no prior training, US and Belgian forces conducted a combined airborne operation under combat conditions. United States land-based air power airlifted about 500 men of a Belgian paracommando regiment, along with their equipment, from the middle of Western Europe to the middle of Africa—a distance of 7,000 miles—and executed a successful predawn airborne assault at Stanleyville. Within 48 hours, the same force executed another airborne operation at Paulis, some 225 miles from Stanleyville, to include assault landings on its 4,200-foot dirt strip. With these two operations complete, land-based air power further demonstrated its responsiveness by a prompt redeployment from the Congo. Within five days of its arrival, it departed. As W. Averell Harriman recalled it, "We said we were going in fast and get out fast, and those who wanted to get out fast won."

Almost a decade and a half later, US land-based air power returned to central Africa and participated in another combined operation of limited duration. In the 1978 Shaba II crisis, US air power demonstrated its flexibility by providing airlift for French and Belgian forces and by moving an African peacekeeping force from five nations, including 1,500 Moroccan troops, into the crisis area. The aircraft carefully avoided operating in the combat zone until hostilities were terminated, thus reducing the potential for unintended consequences. And as in the Stanleyville operation before it, the redeployment was prompt.

Aside from the combined nature of the Shaba II operation and the flexibility and responsiveness demonstrated, the crisis also highlights power projection capabilities of US aircraft. Since neither the French nor Belgians possessed the long-range airlift for Shaba II, US air power was an essential factor in crisis resolution. But perhaps for the long term, the most significant consequence of the flexibility demonstrated by air power in this crisis might be the enhancement of military cooperation and cohesion among the United States and its allies. The resulting confidence would serve as well in the crises that are sure to follow.

It appears, therefore, that the range, payload, and speed of land-based aircraft, particularly when combined with a high order of responsiveness and flexibility, make it a preferred military instrument for use in crises. These collective attributes enable decision makers to respond in a relatively clear and forthright manner, thus lowering the level of uncertainty and contributing to crisis resolution. Moreover, the spectrum of mission capability offered by air power provides a wide range of options to decision makers. The same aircraft that provide worldwide airlift capability for personnel and cargo on a day-to-day basis are readily employed, at one extreme, in combat operations, or alternatively, in humanitarian efforts. If ordnance delivery is desired, limited amounts are available on a near-global basis by tactical aircraft aided by air-to-air refueling. If required, strategic aircraft can deliver vast amounts of ordnance, again on a near-global basis, with a high order of responsiveness, since that potential is inherent in all types of land-based air power. Given the unpredictability of a crisis, a continuing demand exists for timely surveillance and reconnaissance; it is the unique strategic reach of land-based air power that provides this capability.

Our case studies suggest that the characteristics of land-based air power adapt themselves to conditions of crisis. Since these attributes made land-based air power an attractive employment option for decision makers in our case studies, we must now attempt to draw some tentative conclusions about its utility and limitations in crisis resolution.

UTILITY AND LIMITATIONS

At the outset we suggested that a crisis is interactive in nature; that is, it consists of a series of relatively discrete events, between or among actors, that are designed to reduce the level of uncertainty and to create a bargaining atmosphere for resolution. We suggested further that land-based air power could contribute to this process as a consequence of its potential to signal, support, deter, and stabilize or terminate crises. We can offer some generalized conclusions about outcomes in our case studies, but the findings must remain tentative due to the lack of hard evidence in most instances. That is not to imply that the evidence does not exist, but rather that it is not yet available. Nevertheless, the data that are available do seem to suggest that land-based air power offers a high order of utility for crisis resolution.

By their very nature, signals tend to be ambiguous. For various reasons, the perceived message of an action may differ considerably from that intended. Therefore, the use of land-based air power as a signaling device can only be evaluated in broad and general terms. At the start of the Yom Kippur crisis, for example, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger appeared to deliberately withhold US airlift assistance to Israel, thus sending a signal to all involved parties. Precisely how they interpreted the signal may be less important than the likelihood that each party viewed it through a set of assumptions that were probably far more dissimilar than alike. In short, it is probable that they all got different messages.

At the US-Israeli level, it does seem clear that Israel viewed the American hesitation with serious concern. The Arabs had caught the Israelis by surprise and were on the offensive in the Sinai and on the Golan. Within days after the initial attack, the Soviets responded with an alert of their airborne divisions, an augmentation of their Mediterranean fleet, and, perhaps most important, a massive airlift. While these actions were occurring, the Israelis pleaded for US airlift, but almost a week elapsed before the United States responded. During that week the United States sent a clear message—no airlift; the only ambiguity about the US "nondecision" concerned its rationale. And, as has been made clear by the statements of key Israeli figures of the time, the message had a decided effect on the Israelis at a crucial stage in the war.

As for signaling among the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab states, it is not clear what message, if any, Kissinger thought would be sent by delaying the airlift. What seems obvious, however, is that the initial US decision not to employ airlift, followed by the reversal of that decision, added to the existing level of uncertainty and thus contributed to the crisis atmosphere. To repeat our earlier argument, no crisis would exist if each party knew the intentions of the other. Taken at face value, the initial US decision not to start the airlift sent a basic message of noninvolvement, whereas the subsequent decision to begin the airlift conveyed just the opposite. In this light, the ambiguity exists primarily within the decision rationalization process and less within the basic decision. Since the former is enormously difficult, if not impossible, to understand, particularly in a crisis involving a number of actors, perhaps only the basic decision is of consequence to us. Simply stated, this approach would mean that signals imply only the obvious; namely, that no action suggests noninvolvement, whereas alerts, deployments, and similar activity convey the intention to use force. Obviously there are gradations in the latter actions, but the potential for ambiguity may far outweigh their utility as signaling devices.

The Bay of Pigs experience offers another case in point. President Kennedy had publicly vowed that no US forces would be employed against the Cuban homeland. Whatever signals were received by the rest of the world, though, the deployment of proxy force against Castro could not have fooled the Cuban dictator. It had to be clear enough to him that the US government was ready to take serious risks though it had not yet revealed an intent to go all the way. The presence of the US Navy planes from the *Essex* offshore during the invasion was noted by the Cubans and certainly signaled them that Kennedy still had the option of employing US forces directly. The fact that those planes were remaining over international waters and that they were not engaging the Cuban aviators, even in desperate conditions, certainly informed Castro that Kennedy was still operating with restraint. That Castro valued that restraint is clear enough from his orders to his own aircrews not to engage the Americans.

Air power can be highly useful as a signaling device, since it can display its presence in places where sea power and ground forces cannot go—and display it much sooner and more often with less risk. But the signals can indeed be ambiguous. On the third day of the Bay of Pigs fiasco, if the battlefield reconnaissance of the *Essex*'s A-4s meant anything at all to Castro, we do not know; it emitted a totally false signal to our allies on the beaches, for they took it to mean that Kennedy had reversed himself on the use of American units. It soon became clear that this was not so, and the letdown was great. Indeed, air power is a blunt instrument when it comes to signaling and should be used with care.

Signaling aside, there can be little doubt about the utility of land-based aircraft to provide support during a crisis. Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, and others are clear on this point, and we should not underestimate its significance. The Israelis, under attack on two fronts by adversaries who were receiving airlift support from the Soviets, were not about to be defeated militarily, but certainly they were under considerable pressure. In the Sinai, for example, the Israelis were finding it very difficult to contend tactically with Egyptian defenses. The timely arrival of ECM pods and precision-guided munitions on US land-based aircraft, however, enabled them to redress that imbalance, a point reaffirmed by Anwar Sadat. But the tactical battlefield significance of such hardware may be far less important than the positive effect its arrival had on the fighting spirit, morale, and cohesion of the entire IDF. Militarily, these factors sometimes are more important than weapons and often explain either victory or defeat on the battlefield. Moshe Dayan's comments to the effect that he did not wish to think about the consequences had the United States withheld its air or what would happen in the future were the United States to turn its back on Israel suggest the larger significance of the US airlift. Thus, it appears obvious that the utility of land-based aircraft enabled US decision makers, at a time of their own choosing, to display support for the Israelis and to reinforce their behavior during the crisis.

Perhaps of greater significance, however, is the extent to which land-based aircraft contributed to crisis stability. The deployment of replacement aircraft to Israel, the launching of the airlift, and the subsequent delivery of war material contributed to crisis stability by reducing the previously existing uncertainty. With the airlift and deployment underway, both the Israelis and the Soviets had to recognize the United States as a committed participant, one who had entered the bargaining process. The only serious question in their minds might have been the extent to which the United States would continue the support.

The test, of course, came when the Soviets implicitly threatened to deploy their troops unilaterally after the cease-fire had faltered. By responding quickly with a DEFCON 3 alert, a move that placed all US forces at a higher readiness posture, the United States made clear its intention to deter the Soviets. But since the United States simultaneously sent a message to the Israelis demanding adherence to the cease-fire and another to the Soviets explaining the message to the Israelis, it is difficult to conclude that the United States deterred the Soviets from direct intervention by use of the DEFCON 3 alert. But one can argue that in the world of crises, the DEFCON 3 probably clarified US intentions to a far greater extent than would have been the case without such a step. In that respect it may have helped to deter; more likely is that it contributed to crisis resolution by lowering the level of uncertainty.

Our case study of the *Mayaguez* crisis in May 1975 lends some more evidence for the utility of land-based air power when employed in crises. It seems very likely that the deployment of land-based US Air Force and US Navy aircraft over Koh Tang Island emitted a strong signal to the Khmers and did so long before any ground or naval surface units could arrive at the scene. It is equally probable that the intended signal was quite different from the one received by the decision makers in Phnom Penh. Those aircraft deployed over the *Mayaguez* and the island on the 13th and 14th of May had the mission of preventing a behavior change on the part of the adversary. The goal was to maintain surveillance on the ship and the surrounding area, to prevent the movement of the *Mayaguez* to any other location (especially the mainland), and to interrupt the seaborne traffic between the island and the mainland. In short, land-based aircraft had a stability mission. The outcome of their effort was much more than that, for the behavior change that was supposed to be stimulated by the impending marine landings and the bombings of the mainland actually occurred before those efforts were underway. It seems highly probable, then, that those measures intended to maintain the status quo raised such a threat in the minds of the Khmer decision makers that the Cambodians actually went beyond the status quo and released the captives. In other words, the signal received was quite different from the one transmitted, but we do not know enough about the Khmer filters to really understand why that was so. Yet the evidence that is available, to include that offered by the *Mayaguez* skipper, would support the view that land-based air power stabilized the crisis and then modified the behavior of the Khmers, thus terminating the crisis on favorable terms for the United States.

The African crises also lend additional support for the utility of land-based aircraft. The Shaba I and Shaba II crises provide excellent examples of land-based air power's ability to signal, in the narrow sense described earlier. In response to Shaba I, the United States responded weakly and in a low-key fashion by providing limited material aid, most of it noncombat in character, aboard nonmilitary aircraft. The signal sent was one of low commitment. By contrast, in Shaba II, the United States reversed its approach and sent a stronger signal of commitment. United States military land-based aircraft were used to assist in the deployment of French and Belgian men and materiel on a combat mission. At the completion of the operation, US aircraft first redeployed the French and Belgian troops and then moved the African peacekeeping force from five nations to Shaba.

Prior to Shaba II, Soviet and Cuban activity—principally in Angola and Ethiopia—had been increasing, and it appears that the United States intended to convey the message to the Soviets and Cubans that the low-level commitment of Shaba I was no longer valid. It seems equally clear that the United States intended to send that same message to African nations as well, particularly the peacekeeping nations who were willing but unable to become involved.

In order to prevent Shaba II from becoming an East-West struggle, the United States favored a quick resolution that required containment of the incursion and restoration of political stability. That these goals were achieved is further evidence of air power's ability to support a friendly nation and contribute to a successful resolution of a crisis.

Another idea that emerges from our case studies is the utility of land-based air power because of the level of commitment and visibility it offers in contrast to other forms of military power. As we discussed in the initial chapter, the use of land-based aircraft may suggest a level of commitment and a degree of visibility less than that of ground combat forces but more than that of naval power. By design, our case studies did not undertake a specific comparative analysis of these different forms of military power; nonetheless, they do yield some estimates about the nature of the commitment and visibility of land-based air power in crises.

In the Yom Kippur crisis, it appears that the inherent responsiveness and flexibility of air power enabled US decision makers to demonstrate, at a time of their choosing, a certain level of commitment and visibility. By permitting its aircraft and crews to land and depart Lod airport on a daily basis during a period of intense combat, the United States made reasonably clear its willingness to accept risk. The visibility of US land-based aircraft as they approached, departed, and sat on the ramp at Lod while being unloaded, offered a more prominent signal to the Israelis than that of ships located offshore in the Mediterranean, but certainly less prominent than that inherent in ground combat forces. It is quite likely that the Soviets, who were involved in their own airlift, understood this distinction; but if not, the US DEFCON 3 response to their implied threat to deploy Soviet ground combat forces should have made it quite clear.

By way of contrast, during the Bay of Pigs crisis, Kennedy refused to permit the employment of US Navy aircraft in Cuban airspace. He insisted that even those six aircraft that were finally permitted to provide cover on D + 2 have their US markings painted over. That made it clear to friend and foe alike that the level of this commitment was low indeed. Toward the end of the episode, a US Air Force tactical airlift force was preparing to come to the rescue with the resupply that was beyond the capability of the ancient transports of the Cuban exiles; and had it been employed, it would have given our friends in the beachhead and our enemies in Havana quite a different signal. That is not to say that would have been to the good; it might easily have led to an unwilling commitment to obnoxious occupation tasks when growing crises in Europe and the Far East promised to demand even more from the US armed forces. If it is true that Khrushchev was really contemplating a march on Berlin, then perhaps Kennedy's signal of a strictly limited commitment to the Bay of Pigs operation might have been a factor that contributed to Khrushchev's decision not to march on Berlin.

In each of the African crises, the United States chose a moderate level of commitment and visibility. Naval power, of course, could play only a small role in these crises; and the United States carefully avoided the use of ground combat forces, relying instead on other forces and the ability of land-based air power to conduct combined operations. Indeed, the United States even rejected the possible use of its land-based tactical fighter aircraft in the Stanleyville operation, in part because it would have demonstrated too much commitment. The Shaba II effort was more of a refined operation that once again showed the flexibility of land-based air power. By sending its own aircraft and participating in the deployment and redeployment phases of the operation, the United States showed its commitment to be far greater than that suggested earlier in Shaba I. Nevertheless, the United States controlled the visibility of its commitment by confining the aircraft to noncombat areas.

Mayaguez is the only case study that includes the use of ground and naval forces and land-based air power. Suffice it to say, the latter seems to have brought about the desired change in behavior at a level of commitment and visibility that falls roughly between that offered by ground and naval forces.

The limitations of land-based aircraft were made manifest in all of the case studies, and they appear to be persistent in nature. The most obvious, of course, is the issue of overflight. Starting with the Stanleyville operation in 1960 and continuing through the Yom Kippur and *Mayaguez* crises in the mid-1970s, the overflight restrictions presented operational difficulties. The Congo had to be reached via Ascension Island. During the Yom Kippur crisis, only C-5 aircraft with reduced loads could have reached Israel without the use of Lajes in the Azores, and that refueling base became available only after considerable negotiation with the Portuguese. In the *Mayaguez* crisis, the flight path from Okinawa had to avoid Vietnam and Cambodia to reach Thailand. The problems resulting from the lack of overflight, however, were overcome by operational flexibility, and air power accomplished its mission in each instance. Since these crises, US airlift forces have improved their operational flexibility by adding air-to-air refueling capability and substantially increasing the payload of the C-141. Such improvements notwithstanding, the geographical and political realities of the overflight issue remain. Some areas simply may not be accessible via land-based air power; but neither is it likely that they would be readily reached by other forms of military power.

Another factor limiting the use of land-based air power is the possible lack of a suitable base in the objective area; one may not exist, it could be inadequate, or it may not be available. Nonexistence clearly limits the use of land-based air power to the airborne insertion of troops or the delivery of ordnance, but whether or not these capabilities would be adequate depends on the situation. However, a limited facility, consisting only of a runway and ramp area, can be converted to an operational base through the use of specially designed, air-deployable kits. But once again a number of operational assumptions must be made before this approach becomes a suitable alternative. Finally, a base that exists but whose use is denied militarily can be secured militarily. The Congo in 1964 and Grenada in 1983 are examples of this possibility, but one should not minimize the risks associated with such operations and, hence, their unpredictability.

Basing limitations can manifest themselves in strange ways. In the *Mayaguez* case, it was pure good fortune that the US had such fine bases so far away from the homeland but so close to the scene of the crisis. In the Bay of Pigs incident, there were good bases in Florida, hardly a hundred miles away from Cuba, but security and political considerations made it impossible to use them. Rather, the operation was undertaken from less competent bases five times further from the scene of the action, which was indeed a severe limitation on the utility of the air power employed on our side. Sadly, in the end, we might as well have used the bases in Florida, since an astute reporter revealed the cover story as a total fabrication well before the troops were even ashore in Cuba. In short, a determination of base suitability entails consideration of more than just the technical factors.

Another limitation of land-based air power is the relatively small amount of ordnance and cargo it can deliver compared to ground combat forces and sealift. Land-based air power simply cannot compete when the measure of merit is volume. But, as our case studies have indicated, getting to the crisis area quickly, even with limited resources, may be of prime importance. Indeed, the interactive and bargaining nature of a crisis would suggest that the responsiveness of land-based air power is perhaps its most important feature in crisis resolution.

If the payloads of the CEF airlift force were not nearly up to the task at the Bay of Pigs, it is worth noting also that one of the García Line ships was brought back to its offshore station before nightfall on Tuesday. But the last 50 miles to the beach could not be covered by the landing craft during darkness, and the superior payload counted for naught. Because of the want of air superiority, the ship-to-shore movement had to take place at night, if at all. Though the payload disadvantage of air power is still with us, the handicap has been dramatically reduced since the days of the Bay of Pigs. In terms of airlift, the C-5s and C-141s showed how far we have come in the Zairian crises of 1977 and 1978; as for firepower, AC-130 gunships provided substantial fire support over extended periods in 1983 at Grenada (much further than Cuba) operating from bases in the homeland—but with complete air superiority, be it noted.

STRATEGIC AND CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS

In response to future crises, there can be little doubt about where US land-based air power is most likely to be used. As we discussed earlier, the third world will continue to face enormous political, economic, and social problems resulting in tension, strife, and, regrettably, periodic outbreaks of hostilities. Given existing trends, Soviet-American involvement in third world difficulties seems likely. Indeed, the web of relationships between the superpowers and the third world, and the often conflicting nature of superpower interests within the third world, virtually assure conditions from which crises emerge. Furthermore, greater Soviet military involvement in the third world is made more possible by the emerging power projection capability of Soviet naval and air forces. Actual Soviet involvement throughout the third world may become more likely because of recent successes of the Cuban model of revolution. Rejected by the Soviets in the 1960s because it permitted a Marxist guerrilla army rather than a Communist party to lead the revolution, the Cuban model has since resulted in a victory in Nicaragua; thus, it seems to offer considerable potential for the remainder of Central America and elsewhere. Soviet acceptance of the Cuban model would sanction the armed path to socialism and, clearly, would present challenges to the United States.[*]

Response options by the United States are well beyond the scope of this study; but if military force is contemplated for future crises, then the case studies examined here suggest some utility for the use of land-based air power. The African case study, in particular, does indicate that the United States has been quite successful in third world crises when it used the airlift component of its land-based air power in combined operations. In that regard, the Shaba II crisis certainly demonstrated the willingness of some regional powers to accept a peacekeeping role, while it also made amply clear the limits on their military capability. Although they possessed the necessary ground forces to participate in a regional effort, the African nations responding to Shaba II clearly lacked the required air mobility. In the future the United States, with its airlift capacity, a worldwide supporting infrastructure, and a demonstrated record of success, may well consider the extent to which the land-based air power component of its power projection capability might participate in regional peacekeeping efforts, Ideally, such active consideration could perhaps contribute to conditions that reduce tension and apprehension and, thus, help to prevent crises. Reality aside, the perceptions held about air power potential during crises could be of considerable influence before trouble occurs. The task, therefore, is twofold: to contribute to perceptions and to create the reality.

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[*] For a discussion of this view, *see* Mark N. Katz, "The Soviet-Cuban Connection," *International Security* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1983): 88-112.

The fundamental question to be addressed is the extent to which land-based air power can contribute to crisis resolution in the foreseeable future. The first step, a most demanding and arduous one, is conceptual thought. As the responsibility of professional military officers, conceptual thought must establish the fundamental ideas or notions about the ways in which land-based aircraft could be used to demonstrate the desired level of commitment and visibility in crises. Remember, a crisis is an interactive process; a sense of bargaining is inherent. That being the case, employment concepts of land-based aircraft must demonstrate, above all else, the high order of flexibility necessary to accomplish the general objectives established in most crises. Specifically, the objectives would be to signal, support, deter, and to stabilize or terminate conflict. Conceptual thought must at least suggest how these objectives can be achieved through the use of land-based air power; conceptual thought, therefore, is the first step, and it, in turn, leads to force structure design.

At the outset in any crisis there is an immediate requirement for timely and accurate data about the situation; and, most important from a military standpoint, data about the order of battle of other participants. Timely and responsive surveillance and reconnaissance is an essential requirement for initial decisions. As the crisis unfolds, continual updates are necessary for subsequent choices. Throughout the interaction, it is probably essential to minimize the risk and uncertainty inherent in a crisis, and that effort only becomes possible when a high confidence level exists about the crisis data base. Again, no crisis can occur if each party knows the intentions of the other. That level of knowledge, of course, is nearly impossible to attain; but responsive, flexible, and capable surveillance and reconnaissance can reduce the level of uncertainty about intentions by providing information concerning the other crisis participants.

Should the crisis require the use of airlift, conceptual thought could suggest the optimum capability. The criteria obviously would include the standard measures of range, speed, and ton-miles per day, but it also might suggest the desired levels of intertheater and intratheater lift, airborne, and assault capability. Given the potential third world threat environments, passive defensive competence, ECM packages, and complete night and all-weather operational proficiency may be essential for effective airlift crisis operations. Additionally, the full range of special operations, to include a comprehensive psychological warfare capability, could be of enormous utility in third world crises. Perhaps it is this type of competence, in combination with sophisticated and discrete ECM potential, that would permit the use of land-based aircraft for as yet unformulated tactics of escalation control, deescalation, and crisis termination.

Theory might suggest that tactical combat aircraft, designed for ordnance delivery in the third world, may require a level of technological sophistication that exceeds the presumed demands of high intensity combat in central Europe. Since the austere operational environment of the third world is in many respects far more demanding than that found in the industrialized nations, the ability to conduct sustained operations from primitive and environmentally hostile conditions might become a fundamental requirement. The realization that decisions and actions taken in a crisis must strive to reduce the existing level of risk and uncertainty dictates that operational capability be of the highest order. Conceivably, the outcome of a crisis could hinge on a single operational sortie, the success of which might depend on the ability to precisely deliver the prescribed ordnance under the most adverse conditions. The competence to accomplish that task in central Europe may not assure a similar potential in a remote area of the third world.

Finally, conceptual thought might suggest the need for a long-range combat aircraft that could threaten the delivery of vast amounts of conventional ordnance within hours of an order to do so. To be credible, such capability should not result in a degradation of other operational requirements. In other words, it must be a potential that is known and understood by parties who may become involved in crises with the United States. Once again, the perception of that power might be more important than the reality. In the *Mayaguez* crisis, the United States alerted its B-52s on Guam for possible action against the Khmers. No evidence is yet available to indicate if the Khmers were aware of the threat posed against them by the B-52s, but the record of US bombing in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War certainly made them aware of US capability and the potential for its employment. Recently, the AC-130s in the Grenada operation showed a potential to provide precision fire at great distances from their home bases and with long loiter times. Widely reported in the international media, this doubtless added to the awareness in third world capitals. Perhaps the latter is the most significant point. The existence of a credible force capability contributes, at a minimum, to a perception of its use; its absence, of course, assures the opposite.

In sum, the case studies demonstrate considerable utility and some limitations for the use of land-based air power in crisis situations. In very general terms, they indicate how land-based air power might be used to achieve political objectives during future crises. That air power did achieve some success in the past is due, in the main, to its tremendous flexibility. Whether that flexibility will suffice in the future is unknown, for even though land-based air power recently has increased its overall potential by some margin, the politicomilitary environments in which it might be used have become more complex and hence more challenging. If land-based air power is to contribute in any meaningful way to crisis resolution in the future, then those responsible for its use must first conceive employment alternatives; then and only then can they develop an adequate force structure capability. Shaba II and *Mayaguez* show that good results can follow; the Bay of Pigs shows that the previous intellectual labor should also be done at decision-making levels if bad results are to be avoided.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

It goes almost without saying that the topics of the "third world," "air power," "decision making," and "crisis" are so broad that any comprehensive bibliography is out of the question. The treatment given here presents information on the works *most* useful in the preparation of this particular study.

The literature on the general subject of crises in the third world was rather limited until the 1970s, but in the wake of Vietnam it proliferated. Perhaps this was partly an attempt to discover what went wrong and partly the desire to justify the maintenance of large military organizations that seemed to have lost some of their old functions. Similarly, the material on decision making was not voluminous prior to about 1970, but since then it has grown to proportions which should satisfy even the most avid reader. The pilot work—perhaps it is not too much to call it the classic of the field—was Graham T. Allison's *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1971). It is about as widely cited as any other book in political science and has clearly been the stimulus of a tidal wave of articles and books on decision making.

Whatever the scarcity of general theoretical works before the fall of Saigon, lately there has been a great proliferation of them. More specialized books relating to particular crises vary in number according to the crisis being studied. The *Mayaguez* crisis ended almost as soon as it began and consequently, there is only a small amount literature on it. The superpower crisis associated with the Yom Kippur War of 1973 is of such wide and continuing interest that it spawned an enormous amount of writing. Much of the material on particular crises has been published so soon after the events described that it is of limited usefulness, but lately some organizations (e.g., Brookings Institution) have organized major efforts based on case studies. This has led to the production of some important reexaminations long enough after the events and comprehensive enough to produce more reliable samples on which to base generalizations.

Much of the theoretical work at hand arose from the Vietnam experience. One of the most stimulating and useful examples is Ernest R. May's *"Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford, 1973), the general thrust of which is that decision makers tend to give too much weight to that part of history which has occurred in their lifetimes. This led the cold warriors to see any movement toward compromise in Korea and Vietnam as appeasement and to see Ho Chi Minh as just another Hitler. It might also be asserted that it now leads many to look upon El Salvador as another Vietnam. Klaus Knorr in his *On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1966), produced one of the earliest works questioning the utility of military power in its active role and then modified that somewhat with his "Is International Coercion Waning or Rising?" (*International Security* 1 [Spring 1977], 92–110), which held that perhaps violence would not decline at all notwithstanding all the new difficulties in achieving positive outcomes with the military forces. Another of the most important works on the subject is *Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1971), by Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William R. Simons. Equally useful is James Cable's *Gunboat Diplomacy* (New York: Praeger, 1971), which is sure to be provocative reading for the air power practitioner, who will recognize many parallels between the ways that naval power has been used and the manner in which air power might be applied. Perhaps the single most significant book on the utility and limitations of military force in world politics is Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, eds., *Force Without War: US Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978). It is a major effort that based its generalizations on a large number of case studies. Its main message is that though there is always a large risk of failure in attempting to achieve political goals with military force while avoiding war, such attempts have been successful far more than one would suppose from the spate of literature in the wake of the Vietnam War.

On the subject of decision making in crisis, the Allison book already cited is essential to the study. Another work well worth reading for both operators and academics is Irving L. Janis's *Victims of Groupthink* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1972). Equally valuable are Richard K. Bett's *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1977) and Stephen Kaplan's *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981), which is really a sequel to *Force Without War* that covers the subject from the Soviet point of view.

Anticolonialism has such a long and solid tradition in American political thought that many have wondered how the United States has come to be so hated in the third world. A short piece that explains this in a striking way is Scott L. Bills', "The United States, NATO, and the Colonial World," in Lawrence S. Kaplan and Robert W. Clawson, eds., *NATO After Thirty Years* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1981). Some of our European allies, so quick now to criticize US third world policy, would do well to ponder Bills' thesis that America sacrificed her traditional position as the ideological leader of the anticolonial movement specifically to restore the political and economic strength of the Western European states that lay prostrate after two world wars. It was not so much that the United States had become anti-third world—far from it. Rather, she became pro-Europe and the Europeans were the hated colonial masters of everyone in the third world.

Of course, the literature on the third world is much too massive to examine here. There is enough pessimism in it, though, to make one wonder if any amount of capital transfer or human understanding will ever overcome the problems. The perception is that the world is running out of the resources upon which we all depend and that there is disaster ahead. One such treatment comes in an official document, Department of State and Council on Environmental Quality, *The Global 2000 Report to the President* 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980), which offers more problems than solutions. Still more pessimistic, even frightening, is Guy J. Pauker, *The Military Implications of a Possible World Order Crisis in the 1980s* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Report R-2003-AF, November 1977). Pauker suggests that the problems of the third world may already be beyond the point of no return. If this is so, he asks, should the United States be trying to save a sinking ship *or* trying to so mend her defenses that the third world will not drag her down with it—at least, not immediately, anyhow. Though little of the literature shares that forlorn outlook, much of it is, nonetheless, pessimistic. Two of the more useful articles are: Daniel Bell, "The Future World Disorder: The Structural Context of Crisis" (*Foreign Policy* 27, [Summer 1977]: 109-35) and Robert Legvold, "The Super-Rivals: Conflict in the Third World" (*Foreign Affairs* 7 [Spring 1979]: 755-78).

The Yom Kippur War provided the most complex of the case studies employed in this work, as it involved two superpowers and several clients on both sides. That, combined with the fact that the Middle East is the crossroads of many different vital streams of political, religious, and economic conflict, guarantees that the literature on this incident is voluminous. Henry Kissinger, more than any other secretary of state, was at the center of the decision-making process, for President Nixon was largely distracted by the growing Watergate crisis. The second volume of Kissinger's memoirs, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), contains a major treatment of the crisis from his point of view—and he insists that it was indeed a full-blown superpower crisis and that the United States emerged with substantial advances. Another of the decision makers at the vortex of things was Anwar el-Sadat, whose recollections in his *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) must be used with caution, as they are highly colored with Arab nationalism. Of course, the primary sources on the other side are not free of nationalism and they include: Golda Meir's *My Life* (New York: Putnam's, 1975); Moshe Dayan's *Story of My Life* (New York: Morrow, 1976); and Chaim Herzog's, *The War of Atonement* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1975). Volume 2 of Richard Nixon's *Memoirs* (New York: Warner, 1978) covers the crisis in considerably less detail than did his secretary of state. Also, remember that, according to Kissinger, even as the crisis was winding down, Nixon was striving to make sure that the Congressmen understood how vital he had been to the role the United States had played in bringing things to a successful outcome.

The best secondary source on the Yom Kippur War is Nadav Safran's *Israel: The Embattled Ally* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1978). In "Trial by Ordeal: The Yom Kippur War, October 1973," *International Security* 2 (Fall 1977), 130–62, Safran gives a short account of equally high quality. A work that focuses on the American role that is on the same level as Safran's is William B. Quandt's *A Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967–76* (Berkley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1977). Quandt was a staffer for the National Security Council (NSC) and was present at some of the meetings during the crisis at which American responses were considered—insofar as the NSC had a role in the decision making, that is.

Some of the other works that were helpful on the Yom Kippur War include Abraham R. Wagner, *Crisis Decision-Making: Israel's Experience in 1967 and 1973* (New York: Praeger, 1974); Kenneth Hunt, "The Middle East Conflict, 1973, The Military Lessons," *Survival* 16 (January-February 1974): 406–9; "Middle East War," *Strategic Survey, 1973* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1974); Lawrence L. Whetten, *The Canal War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT] Press, 1974); and Martin van Creveld, *Military Lessons of the Yom Kippur War: Historical Perspectives* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1975).

The *Mayaguez* incident lies at the opposite end of the crisis spectrum from the Yom Kippur War. It was relatively simple in that only two states were principal actors: the United States and Cambodia (Kampuchea). There was little threat that it would grow into a world war, but there was a sense of urgency and a chance of violence from the outset. At the time, the situation was fraught with uncertainty, and there are many aspects of it that remain obscure to this day. Still, the *Mayaguez* crisis is better documented than one might suspect, possibly because it had a relevance for partisan politics in the United States.

The primary sources on the *Mayaguez* crisis are fewer than for the Yom Kippur War. There is little or nothing from the adversary side. President Ford's *The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford: A Time to Heal* (New York: Berkley, 1979), gives but little attention to the *Mayaguez,* and Henry Kissinger terminates the second volume of his memoirs with the fall of Nixon in 1974. One book, Roy Rowan's *Four Days of Mayaguez* (New York: Norton, 1975) was on the streets even before the year was out and is, consequently, very limited. Still, Rowan did speak to many of the crewmembers of the ship and has some useful insights to offer on that score. A work that is heavily based on interviews of the actors on the Washington end of the crisis is Richard G. Head, Frisco W. Short, and Robert C. McFarlane, *Crisis Resolution: Presidential Decision Making in the Mayaguez and Korean Confrontations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978). It is one of the better works on the subject, but it was published soon after the events and is based on a study done by the authors while they were all active duty armed forces officers attending the National War College. They depict the whole process as being more neat and orderly than I would have painted it. Of course, Saigon had just fallen and the presidential campaign of 1976 was in the offing. President Ford was suffering in the press for an alleged want of decisiveness, and the Democrats doubtless saw in that and Watergate great opportunities for the recapture of the presidency. Very promptly, the comptroller general had dispatched a Government Accounting Office (GAO) team to the Far East to investigate the crisis and report. Congress at the time was controlled by the Democrats and, of course, the executive branch was in the hands of the Republicans.

I had some talks with some of the members of the investigating teams that summer, and they certainly were not as overtly partisan as I had feared they might be. They conducted extensive interviews with the Americans who had participated in the military end of the operation on the scene of the crisis and their report offers some valuable insights: Comptroller General, "The Seizure of the *Mayaguez*—A Case Study of Crisis Management," a report to the Subcommittee on International

Political and Military Affairs, House Committee on International Relations, 1976. Another primary source of substantial value that goes beyond similar items in other crises is the record of the congressional hearings on the subject: House Committee on International Relations, *Seizure of the Mayaguez, Pt. 2, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Political and Military Affairs*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975).

The secondary material on the *Mayaguez* is very disappointing. Almost all of it is tainted by the Watergate scandal, the Vietnam experience, and the imminence of a bitter political campaign. It is further skewed by the fact that the bulk of the military resources that *could* have affected the decision process in Cambodia was based in Thailand and it was necessary to preserve Thai sensibilities by keeping its role from public view. Consequently, most of the material that appeared in the contemporary electronic and print media had to do with the invasion of Koh Tang and the bombing of the Cambodian mainland, neither of which can have had much to do with the decision to release the prisoners. There is little point in tarrying over such literature because it was not of more than passing interest.

The Bay of Pigs crisis is one of intermediate complexity between the *Mayaguez* at the simple end of the spectrum and the Yom Kippur War at the most complicated end. It, too, generated a mountain of material, related as it was to both American politics and a location in the United States backyard. Much of that material was of no permanent value.

Unfortunately, John F. Kennedy did not live to tell the tale, so we are deprived of him as a possible primary source. Fidel Castro did survive, and he has made much of the Bay of Pigs. It served him so well that if it had not happened at American initiative, then he might have initiated the crisis himself. Because of the political uses that he and his compatriots have made of the crisis, their testimony must be used with great care—though some of it is quite interesting. Castro is a clever man, and not the least among his talents is his aptitude with propaganda.

In a way, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, was himself a primary source, for he was on the White House staff at the time of the crisis. His writing style is in a class by itself. *A Thousand Days* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1965) is fascinating reading that gives a good bit of attention to the Bay of Pigs. But Schlesinger was not one of the inner circle of decision makers; he wrote so soon after the fact and so soon after Kennedy's assassination that those things limit the degree to which one can rely on the work. It is clear enough that he has no interest in denigrating the memory of the president. Kennedy stimulated much writing like that of Schlesinger, and many of the other events of his short tenure were of such momentous character that less attention is paid to the Bay of Pigs than might have been the case—among his eulogists, that is.

As for the exiles involved in the invasion, some useful material has appeared in a book written shortly after Castro released the prisoners in 1963. Haynes Johnson's *The Bay of Pigs: The Leaders' Story of Brigade 2506* (New York: Norton, 1964) is clearly partial, and the work was also prepared quite soon after the event. Allen Dulles was then at the head of the CIA, but the Bay of Pigs played such a small part in his long and illustrious career that there is little on it in his memoirs. Richard Bissell was the man most directly responsible within the CIA for the planning and execution of the operation that led to the crisis and he has made no secret of his views, though most of them find expression in the writings of others—Peter Wyden, for example.

Two American diplomats have offered some useful insights on the background of the crisis: Philip W. Bosnal, "Cuba, Castro, and the United States," *Foreign Affairs* 45 (January 1976): 260–64, and Adolf A. Berle, *Navigating the Rapids* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973). Bonsal was a long-time ambassador to Cuba and Berle was the elder statesman of the Democratic party most expert on the subject of Latin America.

A primary source of the first importance was the report of a committee that Kennedy commissioned to investigate the affair. The group was chaired by Gen Maxwell Taylor, who was then retired and had no official connection with the Kennedy administration—even though he had important ties with the administration before and after the Bay of Pigs crisis. Also on the committee were Allen Dulles and Kennedy's brother, Robert. Within those obvious limitations, the resulting report offers some useful material—it was held under high classification until the late 1970s. United States, Cuban Study Group, four memoranda, 13 June 1961, copy in the library of the National Defense University, Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.

A splendid book on the general subject of Cuba with important special material on Fidel Castro and on the Bay of Pigs is Hugh Thomas's *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). The latest secondary source is Peter Wyden's *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979). Wyden's book is clearly a cut above the norm and is significantly more reliable than those that appeared in the immediate aftermath of the trouble. It is certainly more balanced than seemed possible for those books that appeared while we mourned the passing of Jack Kennedy. The Bay of Pigs was soon overshadowed in the literature on the Cuban missile crisis of the following year. One of the books on the 1962 incident that is reliable and that gives a good bit of attention to the Bay of Pigs as background is Herbert S. Dinerstein's, *The Making of a Missile Crisis* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

Until well after the Second World War, Africa was never central to United States foreign policy—at least sub-Saharan Africa was not. Once the European colonial empires collapsed, interest greatly increased and there was a proliferation of material on the area. Certainly it is far too voluminous to examine in detail here. Among the books most useful for this study was Stephen S. Kaplan et al., *Diplomacy of Power* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981). It is concerned with the ways in which the Soviets have used their military forces to achieve political objectives without resorting to the active use of violence. Much of the story unfolds in sub-Saharan Africa, several of the case studies employed go into great detail, and the book in general is a first-class piece of scholarship.

Most of the material for the various crises treated in the African part of this work was drawn from periodicals of varying quality. One exception is Fred E. Wagoner's *Dragon Rouge: The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980). Lately *Current History* has been publishing a yearly issue completely devoted to sub-Saharan Africa. Its articles are of uniformly high quality and very useful for gathering background material. For the military dimensions of the most recent rescue missions—Shaba I and II (1977 and 1978)—one must fall back on the military periodicals, the most prolific of which is *Military Review*, published at Fort Leavenworth. Such material as is found in *International Security* is very impressive, but the journal has been in print for just a few years so there is not that much in it from those crises that occurred prior to the mid-seventies. A good article to sample is Steven David's "Realignment in the Horn: The Soviet Advantage," *International Security* 4 (Fall 1979). Much of the material published in American journals is weighted with our own ideologies and must be used with care. Some of the journals that specialize in Africa are more useful, but they, too, have their own special viewpoints. One of these is *Africa Report*, done by the African American Institute; and another is *African Affairs*, published in the United Kingdom by the Royal African Society. Of course, the South Africans themselves have their own bias, which is seldom reported in the United States, but can be found in *Africa Insight*, which is published in Pretoria by the Africa Institute of South Africa.

Gen Bruce Palmer, Jr, USA (Ret.), gives a usable sketch of the problems for the United States in the region in "U.S. Security Interests and Africa South of the Sahara," *American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Defense Review* 2 (1978): 15–16. Stephen R. Weissman in "Covert Action in Zaire and Angola," *Political Science Quarterly* 52 (Summer 1979): 265–75, gives some interesting material on ways in which the CIA has tried to contribute to the solution of some of those problems and on its role in some of the crises here examined.

The literature on the use of air power in third world crises is vast enough to overload anybody's reading list. Further, the subject would provide a lifetime enterprise for any researcher so inclined. About the time a researcher has exhausted the literature on one crisis, another is almost sure to have arisen. Since the initial drafts of this study were completed, both the Falklands War and the Grenada invasion have occurred. It is doubtless too early to write definitive studies on those two experiences; but there have been many other crises in which air power figured significantly that could be examined to check the conclusions drawn from the cases employed here and to expand the sample upon which refined generalizations might be based. The *Pueblo* crisis is interesting precisely because it was a failure on our part and because by now the researcher should be able to gain access to much of the documentation. The Matsu and Quemoy Island incidents of the 1950s and the Lebanon crisis of 1958 have already been studied, but perhaps a reexamination from the special point of view of air power might be fruitful. Even before the reaction caused by the humiliation in Vietnam, there was already a great deal of ink spilled over NATO problems. Since then, the difficulties on the Northern European Plain have been near center stage. Yet it would be easy to argue that international conflict there is so deadly, and the principles of deterrence there are so well understood, that both sides will steer clear of major trouble in that arena. Soviet foreign policy, and perhaps ours as well, is far less cautious in other areas, say Africa and Latin America. A case might be made, therefore, that conflict is more likely to occur in the third world than in the NATO arena and that research on subjects having to do with crises outside of Europe may well turn out to be the wave of the future.

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